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FILE No. 245/34

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION
DAR ES SALAAM

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT.
<i>Seychelles, Mauritius, Comoros + Other Islands in Indian Ocean</i>

PREVIOUS FILE:	—
NEXT FILE:	<i>JUNE 1966</i> —

RELATED PAPERS.	
FILE No.	SUBJECT.

*TO CANB
MAY 1976.*

3804/62.

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RESTRICTED

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA

TEMPLE BAR 2435

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
STRAND,
LONDON, W.C.2

In reply quote No.

Memo. No. 677

26th May, 1966.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

MAURITIUS

Further to our telegram 4645 we had a brief word 24th May with Sellars, the officer in the Colonial Office who accompanied the Barwell Commission to Mauritius. He said that the Colonial Secretary had still to make up his mind about the Commission's recommendations. The position was a difficult one, for if the proposals were accepted there could be an unholy row in the island.

2. Briefly Barwell and his colleagues had proposed a 65-member unicameral legislature. Sixty seats would be filled by electors voting on a single common roll, while for the remaining five seats a "corrective device" would operate. The corrective would work on both a party and communal level. In essence it was designed to ensure that the parties who suffered the greatest wastage of votes (i.e. who won seats by the most substantial majorities) would be given extra representation in parliament. The communal factor came into play in the choice of individuals to occupy the five seats. The choice would need to be such as to ensure that the overall representation in Parliament accorded as closely as possible to the communal make up of the population as a whole.

3. Sellars said that, assessed on previous voting figures, the parties which stood to gain by the operation of the corrective factor were the Independent Forward Block and the Parti Mauricien. There was nothing in it for the Moslem Committee of Action, however, and it was from this quarter that trouble was likely to come. The M.C.A. were allied with the Labour Party in the coalition Government and Mohammed would certainly expect Rangoon to stand up with him on this issue.

4. A copy of this memorandum has been sent to the Australian High Commission, Dar Es Salaam.

(Lance Joseph)
for Senior External Affairs Representative

c.c. Australian High Commission,
DAR ES SALAAM.

RESTRICTED



245/34
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INWARD CABLEGRAM

MB.

I.23764.

FROM:

DATED: 13TH MAY, 1966
2000 LT

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION,
LONDON.

REC'D: 14TH MAY, 1966
0740 LT

4645. RESTRICTED.

MAURITIUS

YOUR 2678.

POSITION REMAINS AS OUTLINED IN OUR MEMO 502.
COLONIAL SECRETARY IS STILL CONSIDERING REPORT OF ELECTORAL
COMMISSION.

IT IS NOT THOUGHT ELECTIONS CAN BE HELD MUCH BEFORE OCTOBER.
THEN, UNLESS A CHANGE IS MADE TO THE AGREEMENT REACHED LAST
SEPTEMBER, THERE WILL HAVE TO BE SIX MONTHS OF INTERNAL SELF
GOVERNMENT BEFORE INDEPENDENCE.

IF, OF COURSE, RAMGOOLAM WERE TO LOSE THE ELECTION QUESTION
OF INDEPENDENCE MIGHT BE SHELVED INDEFINITELY.

E.A. (146/1/2)
P.M.'s

14TH MAY, 1966.

Myt 25/5

SEC DS FAS(1) DL FAS(2) UN PACAM AMSP FAS(3) INT
ETA C&P ICR PIO FAS(4) EAMEC E@ SAS(MS) STAFF

DAR ES SALAAM NAIROBI PRETORIA

(P)



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OUTWARD CABLEGRAM

SW:

0.17755

TO:

Sent: 12th May, 1966.
1000

Australian High Commission,
LONDON.

3678

RESTRICTED.

Mauritius.

Glad to know whether date has yet been fixed for
independence.

E.A.(146/1/2)
P.M.'S

12th May, 1966.

SEC	FAS(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	SAS(MS)	DL	ETA	INT	UN
PACAM	AMSP	C&P	EAMEC	E@	AFME	INF	ADMIN		
DAR-ES-SALAAM		NAIROBI	PRETORIA						



Handwritten signature
25/5

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245/34
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OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA

TEMPLEBAR 2435

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
STRAND,
LONDON, W.C.2

In reply quote No. 3/12/86/1
Memo No. 502



The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
Canberra, A.C.T.

MAURITIUS

Please refer to our savingram No. 124 of 20th December, 1965.

2. The Commission sent out to Mauritius earlier this year has now submitted its report on a new electoral system for Mauritius. The report recommends elections to be held on a non-communal basis. If the report is accepted, a general election will probably be held in Mauritius in the early autumn. On the result of the election will depend whether the Colony proceeds to independence.

? April-May
or
no later
autumn
HK.

3. Terrell (Colonial Office) said that the Commission's report was submitted a week or two prior to the election. The then Colonial Secretary, Lord Longford, decided to defer consideration until after the election. There was now a new Secretary of State, Mr. Lee, and he had not had time to master all the facts. Nevertheless, a decision should be reached within the next week or two. Terrell observed that if the report were accepted in full by the British Government, its publication was likely to disappoint the Parti Mauricien and other smaller communal-based parties. There could well be some public protests and possibly disturbances.

(British)

4. A copy of this memorandum has been sent to Dar Es Salaam.

Lance Joseph,
for Senior External Affairs Representative.

The Australian High Commission,
Dar Es Salaam.

Referred for information.

Lance Joseph.

dk.

CONFIDENTIAL

OUTWARD SAVINGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

LJ/ASL

20th December 1955

To External Canberra

From External
Australian High Commission
London

Savingram no. -X. 124

repeated Auscom Dar-es-Salaam

MAURITIUS

Following review of developments in Mauritius was provided 17th December by Terrell, desk officer concerned in the Colonial Office.

2. Electoral Commission foreshadowed in report of recent constitutional conference had now been set up. There were three members - Sir Harold Banwell, Chairman, and Professor Colin Leys and Mr. T.G. Randall. Commission would be proceeding to Mauritius 2nd January. It would spend about one month there, following which it would draw up recommendations for a new electoral system.

3. Part of Commission's remit would be to investigate whether electoral law could be modified so as to telescope time necessary for preparation of electoral registers. Under existing administrative and legal arrangements it would take five months for new electoral registers to be prepared. Thus, even assuming electoral system devised by Banwell, Leys and Randall was accepted without further ado, it would not be possible, under present electoral law, to hold elections before end of July - which would throw out of gear existing timetable for independence, by end of 1966. In view of this, Terrell thought British might wish to curtail interim period of full internal self government which was to precede grant of independence.

4. Independence would of course only be forthcoming if the new legislature passed resolution in favour by a simple majority. Terrell said British would expect that election would produce a Legislative Assembly which would pass such a resolution. But the unexpected could happen. And, (Terrell observed) British were not so confident about result of election as they were three months ago.

5. There were two reasons for this. The first was the inertness of the Labour Party. Labour had been losing ground during the last year or two and it had long been thought it would lose seats at next election to other parties whose attitude to independence was either hostile or equivocal. Things had grown worse in past few weeks, however, partly because of sickness of Mangoolam, but partly also because Labour Party spokesmen were showing themselves inadequate to task of defending themselves against propaganda barrage launched by Parti Mauricien - who, as you know, have resigned from the Coalition Government to enter dissent against independence.

CONFIDENTIAL

... 2 125/1
High Commissioner
to see

6. Terrell said that effectiveness of Parti Mauricien propaganda campaign was the second cause for disquiet. As natural refuge for all those elements in Mauritius who equated independence with Hindu domination, the Parti Mauricien's muscle-flexing about independence had been predictable. But Gaetan Duval and his lieutenants had now shrewdly fastened on to the agreement setting up the new British Indian Ocean Territory as a means of extending their support amongst the Hindu population, hitherto regarded as the preserve of the Labour Party and Independent Forward Block. Terrell said that the burden of the Parti Mauricien attack was that Mangoolam had sold out Mauritius' "heritage" for a "paltry" \$3 million, that this had not been nearly enough, and that indeed Mauritius should not be content with cash compensation but should demand terms which continued to bring advantages over the years i.e. guaranteed markets for Mauritius' sugar surpluses and liberal quotas in Britain and U.S. for Mauritian migrants.

7. Terrell added that, while much of the Parti Mauricien's campaign was woolly and mutually inconsistent (the party stands four square against independence yet promises to rid Mauritius of the "Anglo-Saxon robbers"; Duval demands more generous terms for agreeing to a base which in next breath he warns could bring about a nuclear holocaust in Mauritius) its overall strategy was clear enough. It aimed to exploit the base issue as a means of getting enough Parti Mauricien candidates returned at the election to frustrate independence. By speaking out against the base the Parti Mauricien hoped to attract the votes of the substantial neutralist element amongst the Hindu population (it already had the almost undivided backing of the Creole and Franco Mauricien communities). At same time, by holding out prospect that a Parti Mauricien Government would be able to re-negotiate the terms of cession of Chagos so as to provide for a preferential market in U.S. for Mauritius' surplus sugar crop, Duval hoped to persuade the sugar barons to fork out the cash required to finance a vigorous Parti Mauricien campaign.

8. Terrell commented that it was difficult to assess how far the present campaign by Duval was being backed by the Franco-Mauritian financial interests who stood behind the Parti Mauricien. However, the sugar planters were no fools, at least where their money was concerned. Thus they were only likely to stake Duval if they thought his bid for carrying off the election stood some chance of success. Terrell added that their assessment of Duval's chances would probably be influenced as much as anything by the size of crowds he was able to attract to his political rallies. In this connection, Duval must have been disappointed by result of his efforts to stage a massive protest rally at the Camps de Mars in Port Louis on 5th December. Expecting a crowd of 200,000, only 60,000 turned up. The audience, moreover, remained largely unresponsive to Duval's haranguing, and at end of it all quietly moved off home. That the rally had been preceded by a large-scale propaganda build-up - with telegrams to U Thant, the O.A.U., and Shastri, forecasting imminent resignation of Mauritius' Government in protest over disregard of Diego Garcia deal - made the actual event that much flatter. Terrell remarked that Camp de Mars rally had been regarded in Whitehall as a test of Mauritians'

... 3

willingness to behave themselves in an orderly fashion. Because of peacefulness of the "demonstration", U.K. had now decided to withdraw the company of Gloucesters from the island.

9. As regards Mauritius Labour Party, Terrell said it was currently suffering from lack of effective leadership. Ramgoolam had been ill ever since returning from the September Constitutional conference and had now been admitted to a London hospital, where he was to undergo a prostate operation. In his absence, the latent rivalry in Labour Party between the moderates and the more militantly communal wing was beginning to assert itself. Further, no Labour Party leader seemed able to counter the Parti Mauricien propaganda attacks and indeed British had doubts whether Ramgoolam, when he returned, would be fit enough to lead an effective counter campaign against Duval's vigorous electoral challenge. Terrell hastened to add that British nevertheless felt that Labour Party would defeat Duval, if only because the general public in Mauritius tended largely to give unthinking support at the polls to the leaders of their own community. But, in the face of their relative decline since last election, Labour Party obviously could not be too complacent.

10. Labour's high card of course was the promise of early independence. However, to guarantee against this card being trumped, Labour somehow had to convince the Mauritian population that independence was a good thing. And this (Terrell observed) was the rub. For the unpalatable fact was that in terms of economic and social wellbeing, and indeed in terms of just about anything but the aesthetic satisfaction of Mauritian Ministers, whose international status would be enhanced, Mauritius stood nothing to gain, and perhaps race relation-wise something to lose, by independence. In the past the public in Mauritius had tended to assume that independence was an inevitable and desired goal. But developments in newly independent countries in Africa had tended to provoke second thoughts, and there were many Mauritians who were obviously now looking for reassurance.

11. Terrell said that, for their part, British were keen Mauritius should proceed to independence. This was what was required by the dominant party and, while he recognised that independence was bound to quicken the pace of local politics, the tradition in the island of multi-racial harmony in public affairs had convinced Mr. Greenwood that Mauritius stood as good a chance as any other British Colonial territory of weathering the stresses of independence. Terrell observed that there was no advantage to U.K. in perpetuating colonial rule, and that there was a distinct distaste amongst British Ministers for Parti Mauricien's formula of association with U.K. Thus British aim in general was to bolster Ramgoolam and his Government to ensure that independence proceeded as planned.

12. The trouble, Terrell said, was that the Colonial Office were having difficulty in reconciling this political aim with the logical financial consequences. For, if Ramgoolam was to be able to convince his electorate that independence was a good thing, it would obviously be helpful if he could announce that British Government were willing to bestow an attractive

... 4

independence settlement on the island. This would cut the ground from beneath the feet of the Parti Mauricien and might even lead to Duval dropping base issue altogether. But, Terrell said, the rigidity of British aid ceiling guaranteed in advance that the U.K. could not be generous. At same time it was contrary to all precedents for Britain to enter into a commitment about an independence settlement months before independence were due and indeed at a time when it was not even certain that there would be any independence. Terrell said Ramgoolam was down to have discussions with Colonial Secretary in February when he would no doubt try to wring some kind of financial commitment from Mr. Greenwood. However, at least at this stage, it appeared unlikely that Ramgoolam would go away with any substantial to wave in front of his electorate. Certainly British could not give him sort of ammunition he would need to shoot down Duval's campaign.

13. It was unfortunately similarly a fact that British were unable to help much in other directions. U.K. was willing to go through motions of trying to persuade Americans to take more Mauritian sugar. But they realised in advance that efforts in this direction were bound to fail; the other sugar lobbies in Washington were much too strong. U.S. was also unlikely to give much change on Mauritian immigration. Immigration from Mauritius in fact was likely to have to be curtailed as result of tightening up in U.K.'s own admissions of Commonwealth immigrants.

14. Terrell observed in conclusion that it would not be necessary for the Parti Mauricien to win a majority of seats at the election to block independence. At least some non-P.M. members also had doubts about independence and it would, for instance, not be inconceivable for the Independent Forward Block to change its mind. The I.F.B. were much more concerned about internal reform than independence and, while they endorsed independence at London constitutional conference, this had not been without much soul searching. Terrell went on to speculate that, given that the M.L.P. leadership was more concerned about status symbols of independence than its other implications, there was even a chance that the M.L.P. would throw in their hand on independence if they came to assess that odds stacked against them were too formidable. In that event there could be a realignment in Mauritian politics, with the Parti Mauricien allying itself with the right and centre of the M.L.P. in common defence against a left made up of the Labour radicals, the I.F.B. and the All Mauritius Hindu Congress (an extremist Hindu organisation). Terrell added that all sorts of permutations and combinations were possible. Certainly the forthcoming election should bring some surprises. The older political leaders, Ramgoolam and Koenig, were manifestly slaying up and losing ground to firebrands like Harold Walter, Duval, and I.F.B. leader, Bimndoyal. Now that students educated and indoctrinated in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe were beginning to trickle back to Mauritius the Communists were likely in future to wield much more influence on the island than they had been able to do in the past.

Distribution: High Commissioner
Deputy High Commissioner
Official Secretary
External Affairs

245/34

1st December, 1965.

I am most grateful to you for the copy of your report dated 20th November to the Area Manager. It is concise and readable and most useful to me.

I hope that you received a sufficient number of copies of immigration forms, sent to you by this office about a fortnight ago. Let me know if you need more.

All good wishes to yourself and Mrs Morrish, and again thanks for your generous assistance during my recent visits.

(H. Gilchrist)
High Commissioner for Australia
in Tanzania

Mr H.P. Morrish,
QANTAS Representative,
Curepipe,
MAURITIUS.

BY AIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L
QANTAS EMPIRE AIRWAYS LIMITED

MEMORANDUM

TO Area Manager Africa.

FROM Qantas Representative, Mauritius
OUR REF. WM. 522/M.2 TEL. EXTN.
YOUR REF.

COPIES TO

DATE 20th November, 1965

POLITICAL REPORT - MAURITIUS

ABBREVIATIONS:
=====

Parti Travalliste (Labor Party)	-	PT.
Parti Mauricien Social Democrate	-	PM.
Committee of Action Mussulman	-	CAM.
* (Independent Forward Block	-	IFB.
(All Hindu Mauritian Congress	-	AHMC.

*The AHMC is a party newly formed by amalgamation of the IFB and Congress newspaper adherents.

Current situation:-

1. Parti Travalliste, middle of the road, strongest both numerically and in number of seats.

Dr Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Leader and Premier, sound politician, well respected, but out of his depth as Minister of Finance.

(Previously whilst Mayor of Port Louis, only Mayor in Mauritius to find it impossible to keep within his own budget).

Shortly to commence campaign to fight election vital to parties' aim for Independence.

2. Parti Mauricien - mild socialist, anti Independence, (at least in near future) has already commenced electoral campaign, with intention of fighting in Labor strongholds. Leader Koenig, just resigned as Attorney General to cross to non-existent opposition benches (Coalition Government) well respected.

Number two in hierarchy, Gaetan Duval, young energetic Creole, until recent resignation (with Koenig and Devienne) Minister of Housing and Migration, now also in opposition.

The resignations were over the Anglo-U.S. bases to be established in Diego Garcia and the Seychelles.

2/

Current situation:-(2. contn'd)

P.M. holds the view that sale of Diego Garcia to UK for some forty million rupees was virtually criminal on two counts. Firstly, retention of the islands plus some expenditure could provide work for some 4000 Mauritians, and income from the proposed coconut oil production would return more than forty million rupees in a short period.

Secondly, if the bases were sold, the price should have been very much higher (Capacity of U.S. to pay). Slogan now "No British No bases."

3. Committee of Action Musaulman, (Leader Rajack Mohamed) P.M. believes CAM about faced in London during Constitutional talks, and supported idea of Independence, despite assurances to the contrary before leaving Mauritius.

CAM currently very quiet, not publicising their intentions in the coming election.

Independent Forward Block, (Leader Sookdeo Bissoondoyal) predominantly Hindu, Socialist Left, which, upon return from UK talks, arranged amalgamation with editors of Congress newspaper, and has formed new Party, called "All Hindu Mauritian Congress".

This party has already obtained some support from members of the P.T., and could emerge the most powerful of all after the elections.

They have announced they will accept overtures from the P.T., if not in amalgamation, at least in Association, but talks, if any, between the two are being kept very secret.

Ministerial Resignations:-

1. Koenig Leader of the P.M., from post of Attorney General. To be replaced by Osman, (CAM.) previously Minister of Information - an appointment which must have caused the Hindu Premier some disquiet.
The Information portfolio goes to Balancy, (P.T.) previously Parliamentary Secretary of Education.
He in turn is replaced by Ramjan, also C.A.M.
2. Duval, assistant to Koenig (P.M.) resigned as Minister of Housing, Land, Town Planning and Migration, and has been replaced tentatively by Rajack Mohamed (C.A.M.) for Housing, Land & Town Planning, and Jugnauth (I.F.B.) Ministry of Development. This latter appointment must also have been repugnant to Ramgoolam, unless it indicates some collusion between the P.T. and A.H.M.C.

3/

Ministerial Resignations:-(contn'd)

3. Devienne, P.M. also resigned together with Koenig and Duval, from Ministry of Development and is replaced by Jugnauth I.P.B.
4. The present Ministerial line up consists of 8 from Parti Travailleiste, 3 I.P.B., 2 C.A.M. and 1 Independent (Paturau).

Electoral Commission:-

This group of three members is due to arrive on December 6, and should end their examination of the local scene by the end of December. Subsequently, the electoral rolls will require amendment, and this, with the registration of new voters etc, will probably take several weeks, bringing us up to possibly March or even later.

From Ramgoolam's point of view, the middle of the year is the least advantageous for holding an election, due to cessation of the sugar harvest and consequent unemployment, the blame for which is normally laid at the feet of the party in power.

As a result of this, a senior member of the Parti Mauricien, Norbert Poupard, told me privately that out of the 60 seats which will be balloted for, the P.M. expects to win 24, leaving 36 to be won by the remaining parties.

This will be on the basis of the P.M., which has already commenced campaigning, proclaiming itself the National Party, with ranks open to all races and creeds, with a platform for present association, and a review concerning Independence in 5 years.

The remaining 10 of the total 70 seats will be later allotted to the "best loser" in certain districts to preserve a balance of representation in those districts.

It is anticipated that the election will be fiercely fought, and although on present numbers the Labor Party appears to be favoured, the actual outcome some months hence could be different.

One very strange aspect of the present scene:-

Dr Ramgoolam (Hindu) sold Diego Garcia and the other islands to UK & USA for bases.

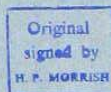
Messrs Koenig & Duval (Creole) resigned from the Ministry because of this.

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Electoral Commission:- (contn'd)

Now India (Hindu) has protested strongly at the intentions of the Anglo/US Administration to create the bases.

In effect, the Parti Mauricien is siding with Hindu India against the action of the Hindu Premier of Mauritius which appears to indicate lack of contact or at least agreement between Mauritius and Mother India.



(H.P. MORRISH)

C O N F I D E N T I A L

245/34

1st December, 1965.

I am most grateful to you for your letter (17781/3) of 25th November and for the attached extract from the Kuala Lumpur C.E.C.C. proceedings of September, 1964, regarding technical assistance for Mauritius. As soon as I can get rid of a number of other emergencies here I shall be writing briefly to Canberra about Mauritius in the light of my recent visit and will bring the Kuala Lumpur minute to Canberra's attention.

Thank you also for the two copies of the Mauritius Annual Report for 1964 which I greatly appreciate. I have sent one to Canberra.

With all good wishes to yourself and Mrs Carpenter.

(H. Gilchrist)
High Commissioner for Australia
in Tanzania

S.D. Carpenter, Esq., O.B.E.,
Chief Secretary's Office,
MAURITIUS.



CHIEF SECRETARY'S OFFICE
MAURITIUS

25th November, 1965.

Dear Mr. Pilchurst.

You may remember that during your brief stop over you mentioned to Rostowski the question whether Mauritius could be included within the scope of the Colombo Plan. He told you that the Premier had made a statement on this subject at the Commonwealth Economic Conference, and promised to let you have a copy. The Premier's statement is attached and you will see that it was made at the September 1964 Conference in Kuala Lumpur. It is not perhaps quite so unambiguous as Rostowski was let to believe, but it certainly shows Mauritians interested in the question.

Yours sincerely

S.D. Carpenter

(S.D. CARPENTER)

Notes H.S. 11/11

H. Gilchrist Esq.,
Australian High Commissioner,
Bank House (4th Floor),
Independence Ave.,
P.O. Box 2996,
DAR-ES-SALAAM.

File

/VD

Extract from the Summary Record of Proceedings of the
Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Economic Consultative
Council held in September, 1964

On the subject of technical assistance Dr. Ramgoolam wished particularly to support the proposals mentioned in the Commonwealth Liaison Committee's report for administrative training and a Commonwealth Foundation. Technical assistance, which was one of the newest sciences in the world, was vitally linked with economic progress. Advice and experts were freely forthcoming from the United Nations Organisations and from within the Commonwealth, but there was a tendency for the services of these experts sometimes to be wasted despite insistence upon the provision of adequate counterparts. It was pointless for experts to advise on what should be done to improve conditions in a particular field or to provide an economic return from a particular project, if the country concerned did not possess administrators, economists and professional men in various categories with sufficient experience to put these ideas into practice. There was a need for substantial training facilities linked closely with, and supplementing, those supplied by the various United Nations Organisations, for example, demand for economists greatly exceeded supply and countries like Mauritius were frequently told that they would have to forego the advice and services of experienced economists actually working in the country itself although visiting experts would come to advise them from time to time. He felt strongly that this was a field in which a better equipped country could perhaps afford to be a little more self-sacrificing. Countries with an economic situation similar to that of Mauritius particularly required the services of experienced and able economists. Mauritius was surrounded by sea and found herself on the fringe of the Colombo Plan and the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan. She did not qualify for assistance under the Colombo Plan and although she had from time to time been helped under the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan, he felt she merited better consideration than she had received so far.

*File Mauritius
20/1/4*

PERSONAL

24th November, 1965.

This is to thank you for all your generous hospitality during my recent visits to Mauritius, which I must say I enjoyed enormously, despite a degree of physical fatigue due to air travel.

Yesterday I received from Mr Carpenter two copies of the Mauritius Government's Annual Report for 1964, and have despatched one copy to Canberra. If you would convey this acknowledgment to him with my thanks I should be grateful. (As a government report, it is more attractively produced than most that I've seen.)

This week I wrote to Canberra asking for documentary material on Australia protocolary practice to be sent to me for despatch to you "For Mauritius Government official use only", and I hope that something useful will eventuate.

I have today written to Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, thanking him for his hospitality. Government House etiquette, I believe, precludes me from writing to Lady Rennie, but you might mention to her that the lunch which she served to me that day was the most delicious lunch I've had at any Government House, State House or Presidential Palace anywhere in twenty years, and that I greatly appreciated the opportunity of meeting Sir John and herself at home.

Strictly speaking, the channel for official communications between Australia and Mauritius is Australia House, London, and from time to time our External Affairs officers there absorb C.R.O. desk views on recent developments and pass them to Canberra. However, as Mauritius is close to the region of my post's responsibility, I hope that the more direct links forged as a result of personal contacts through visits (Dingle's in 1964 and mine this year) will not become rusty as Independence approaches. Australia's interest in Mauritius will doubtless increase, especially after the direct jet aircraft service between Perth and Plaisance comes into operation towards the end of next year. There is also a possibility that a group of Australian parliamentary members may pass through Mauritius next year on their way to Africa.

My daughter Athene will be passing through Mauritius, *enquiry* on Sunday morning, 5th December, on her way here from Sydney, and leaving on the following Monday afternoon. She is an

.../2 intellectually eclectic

Mr Roman Rostowski,
Deputy Chief Secretary,
Government of Mauritius,
PORT LOUIS. MAURITIUS.

Copy to London

- 2 -

intellectually eclectic 14-year-old. Harvie Morrish of QANTAS will be keeping an eye on her, but if she should drop in at your office you might be kind enough to let her have a look at the Council Room in the old Government building next door, which I think would interest her.

All good wishes,

(H. Gilchrist)
High Commissioner for Australia
in Tanzania

File at Mauritius
245/34

P.O. Box 2996.

24th November, 1965.

This belated note is to thank you and Mrs Vickers for your kindness and hospitality during my recent visits to Mauritius. It was good of you to have me to lunch at your home, and I must say that I envied your occupation of such a lovely old villa. I very much enjoyed the drive around points of interest on the island and the swim at your beach bungalow at Grand-Baie.

I have written personally to Sir Seewoosagur thanking him for his hospitality and also to Roman Rostowski. Both of them, as well as the Governor and Lady Rennie were also generously hospitable to me during my two short visits.

Although, strictly speaking, the official line of communication between Australia and Mauritius is through Australia House in London, if at any time I can be of assistance to you in the context of Australian-Mauritian relations, I will do my utmost to help.

In Canberra recently I met Peter Heydon and passed to him Mrs Vickers' kind regards, which he asked me to reciprocate to her. I also passed to Colin Roberts, who was recently acting as Administrator of Cocos Island, her message to him about stamps; he said that he had not yet received them but expected to do so very shortly.

With all good wishes to Mrs Vickers and yourself,

E. GILCHRIST

(E. Gilchrist)
High Commissioner for Australia
in Tanzania

The Honourable T.D. Vickers, C.M.G.,
Chief Secretary of Mauritius,
PORT LOUIS. MAURITIUS.

File Mauritius
245/34

24th November, 1965.

This note is to thank you for your great kindness and hospitality to me during my two recent brief visits to your country.

When I arrived with President Tsiranana's entourage I had no expectation that I would be invited to the official functions in his honour, nor offered official transportation and other assistance of that nature, for which I was very grateful. During my second visit, returning from Australia to Dar es Salaam, I greatly enjoyed the evening with friends at your house in Port Louis and the opportunity to have a chat with you and to meet Lady Ramgoolam.

These occasions enabled me to meet many of the leading personalities in Mauritius, including your Chief Justice and several of your Ministers, as well as His Excellency the Governor and senior members of the Administration. Even after such short stays, I felt a warm affection for Mauritius and its people and found myself personally interested in their problems, and I hope that, before my term of service here in Dar es Salaam ends next August, I shall have an opportunity to visit the island again. I believe that Australia's interest in Mauritius will grow as Independence approaches, especially after the direct jet aircraft service between Australia and Mauritius comes into operation towards the end of next year.

May I say that when I was in Mauritius I heard kindly references to you by a great variety of people, including persons who, for one reason or other, differed from you in political approach. Their sentiments, I felt, were encouraging portents in an island where integration of the various communities is not without difficulties. I am sure that my Government hopes, as strongly as I do personally, that the people of Mauritius will succeed in working out their political, social and economic problems together peacefully.

With every good wish for yourself and Lady Ramgoolam,

I am,

H. GILCHRIST

(H. Gilchrist)
High Commissioner for Australia
in Tanzania

The Honourable Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam,
Prime Minister of Mauritius,
PORT LOUIS. MAURITIUS.

P.S. The library in your house aroused my admiration and envy.

Copy to London & Canberra

245/34

1060

23rd November, 1965.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

MAURITIUS: ANNUAL REPORT

At our request, the Chief Secretary's Office in Mauritius has sent us two complimentary copies of the Mauritius Government's latest annual report ("Report on Mauritius, 1964"), which has just been published. One copy is enclosed for your information.

....

H. GILCHRIST

(H. Gilchrist)
High Commissioner

Mauritius1. GENERAL AND HISTORICAL

Report on Mauritius (Annual)

A short History of Mauritius - Barnwell, J.P. and Toussaint, A.
Longmans, Green and Co., London (1949)

Isle de France - Ile Maurice (in French) - Sornay, Pierre de
The General Printing and Stationery Co. Ltd., Port-Louis (1950)

Bibliography of Mauritius: 1502-1954 - Toussaint, A. and Adolphe, H.
Esclapart Ltd., Port Louis (1956)

Islands in a Forgotten Sea - Bulpin, T.V.
Howard Timmins, Durban (1954)

The Shoals of Capricorn - Ommamey, F.D.
Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co. Ltd. London (1952)

Mauritius in Transition - Roy, J.M.
Published by the Author, Port Louis (1960)

Limuria, The Lesser Dependencies of Mauritius - Scott, Robert
Oxford University Press, London (1961)

Les Mascareignes (in French) - d'Unienville, Alix
Albin Michel, Paris (1954)

2. GOVERNMENT

Les Constitutions de l'Ile Maurice - Napal, D. (Most documents in English)
The Mauritius Printing Co. Ltd. Port Louis (1962)

The Mauritius (Constitution) Order 1964
Legal Supplement to the Government Gazette No. 14 of 11th March 1964.
Constitutional Development in Mauritius - Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1961.

3. SOCIAL

1962 Population Census of Mauritius and its Dependencies Vols. I & II
Central Statistical Office.

Social Policies and Population Growth in Mauritius (Sessional Paper
No. 6 of 1960 - Titmuss, R. and Abel-Smith, B.

Annual Reports: Ministry of Education
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Labour

4. NATIONAL ECONOMY

Financial Report for the Year 1962-1963 - Ministry of Finance (Annual)

Estimates 1964-1965 - Ministry of Finance (Annual)

The Economic and Social Structure of Mauritius (Sessional Paper No. 7
of 1960) - Meade, J.E. and others

Quarterly Digest of Statistics Vol. 3 No. 4 of 1963 (Quarterly)
Central Statistical Office (1964)

The Reconstruction and Development Programme 1960-1965 - Sessional Paper
No. 2 of 1961

Extension of the Reconstruction and Development Programme to cover the
six-year period 1960-66 - Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1964.

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245/34

1055

19th November, 1965.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

MAURITIUS: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON
AUSTRALIAN PROTOCOL AND ETIQUETTE

The Deputy Chief Secretary of the Mauritius Government (Rostowski) recently asked me whether you could help his government by providing documents setting forth the Australian Government's practices in the sphere of protocol and etiquette.

2. Rostowski explained that some government members of Indian origin were critical of some features of the protocol followed by the colonial administration, on the ground that these features were "French". Rostowski conceded that the administration was guided largely by Serre's "Manuel du Protocole", but pointed out that French practice had been largely adopted by most countries. In order, however, to convince local critics (some of whom were anti-French in their outlook), he felt that it would be useful for the practice of some other Commonwealth country — such as Australia — to be available for quotation in support of the generally-accepted rules. Apart from this special aspect, however, the administration needed general guidance in this field as Independence drew nearer.

3. I told Rostowski that we used the "Manuel du Protocole" in the Department of External Affairs, and also took careful note of Satow, and that, so far as I knew, we had not formulated any distinctive Australian code of practice. I also drew his attention to the distinction between international protocol practice, as followed by the Department of External Affairs, and the practice of the Ceremonial and Hospitality Branch of the Prime Minister's Department, pointing out that these were, as far as I knew, complementary. I gave him three copies of the book of the arrangements for President Tsiranana's State Visit, kindly provided by Mr Backen of Prime Minister's Department.

4. Any other documents or guidance which you could let me have for transmission to Rostowski, restricted to Mauritius Government official use only, would be much appreciated.

H. GILCHRIST

(H. Gilchrist)
High Commissioner

Copy to: Prime Minister's Department
London

RESTRICTED

245/34

1045

19th November, 1965.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

MAURITIUS: INFORMATION ON THE ECONOMY

...

Attached is a copy of a handbook, "Mauritius Commerce and Industry" (price 15 rupees Mauritius, equivalent to £A.1/8/-) published in 1964 by the Mauritius Ministry of Industry, Commerce and External Communications, for the information of investors, trade agencies and visitors. It should be useful to you as a reference work on the economy of Mauritius. It contains a bibliography of recent works on Mauritius.

2. We have asked the Mauritius Chief Secretary's office to let us have two copies of the Mauritius Government's annual report for 1964, recently published, and will send you a copy when received.

3. In "Mauritius Commerce and Industry", reference is made (at p.25) to the Meade Mission's report (September 1960) on "The Economic and Social Structure of Mauritius", and to the preceding Titmuss Mission's report on social policies and population growth in Mauritius. Neither of these reports is held by this High Commission. We assume that, if you need them, you will ask London Office to obtain them from H.M.S.O. The Meade Report is recommended as a basic document of continuing reference value.

H. GILCHRIST

(H. Gilchrist)
High Commissioner

Copy to: London (without attachment)



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION
DAR ES SALAAM

In reply quote No. 245/34

Memorandum No. 1045

19th November, 1965.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

MAURITIUS: INFORMATION ON THE ECONOMY

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Attached is a copy of a handbook, "Mauritius Commerce and Industry" (price 15 rupees Mauritius, equivalent to £A.1/8/-) published in 1964 by the Mauritius Ministry of Industry, Commerce and External Communications, for the information of investors, trade agencies and visitors. It should be useful to you as a reference work on the economy of Mauritius. It contains a bibliography of recent works on Mauritius.

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H. GILCHRIST

(H. Gilchrist)
High Commissioner

Copy to: London (without attachment)

Cutting From Eastern & Central Africa Swiregram 1
18/11/65

Israeli Representation in Mauritius

The Israeli Ambassador was additionally accredited as Israeli Consul
in Mauritius.

245/34



CHIEF SECRETARY'S OFFICE
MAURITIUS

245/34

16th November, 1965.

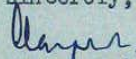
Dear Mr. Pycher,

I am enclosing two complimentary copies of the 1964 Report on Mauritius which I promised to send to you. I passed on your message to Roman Rostowski and he will be delighted if you can obtain the publications on protocol for us.

I trust that you had a good journey back to Dar-es-Salaam.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,


(S.D. CARPENTER)

H. Gilchrist, Esq.,
Australian High Commission,
Bank House (4th Floor),
Independent Avenue,
P.O. Box 2996,
DAR-ES-SALAAM.



(a note to Rostowski)

AS



Mr Cole

Please today dispatch
Mr H. Morris
airfreight to Australian
Trade Commissioner, Mauritius
Port Louis,

200 ^{8 pax} of forms of
application, & medical
certification forms for
immigration into Australia.

HS. 16/11/65

done
19/11/65

CUTTING FROM HONG KONG SAVINGRAM NO. 42 of 28TH OCTOBER, 1965

SUMMARY OF EVENTS CONCERNING COMMUNIST CHINA UP TO 27/10/65

245/34

MAURITIUS

According to NCNA, S. Ramgoolam, premier of Mauritius, called on Ho Ying, Chinese Ambassador to Tanzania on 24th October in Accra: they are said to have had a "friendly talk on the development of relations between the two countries."



CONFIDENTIAL
245/34

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA

TEMPLE BAR 2435

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2.

In reply quote No.

Memo No. 1524

18th October, 1965.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
Canberra, A.C.T.
29 OCT 1965

DAR ES SALAM

MAURITIUS

As you know the recent Mauritius constitutional conference resulted in the British Government agreeing to a formula which envisages the island proceeding to independence within the Commonwealth by the end of 1966. Mr. Greenwood rejected the Parti Mauricien's demand for a referendum to decide between independence and "free association" claiming that this would only prolong uncertainty and that its main effect would be to deepen communal divisions and rivalries. Nevertheless it has been conceded that an election should be held before independence and this in theory still holds out a chance for the PM and other groups opposed to independence. Before independence is granted, a majority vote in favour of this must be passed in the legislature emerging from the elections.

2. A further element in the Greenwood formula is the decision to appoint an electoral commission to visit Mauritius to demarcate electoral boundaries and recommend on the most appropriate electoral system. The parties failed to reach agreement on these matters at the London conference. However, the terms of reference of the Commission - to devise a solution based on a common roll and multi-member constituencies - indicates that the electoral system finally decided upon will more closely accord with Labour's demands. When the commission has reported, a date will be set for the election, following which a new Government will be formed. If that Government passes a resolution in the new legislature asking for independence, this will be granted after six months of full internal self-government.

3. The enclosed text of Mr. Greenwood's closing speech to the conference elaborates on some of the above points. It also (on page 3) provides an outline of the British Government's undertaking as regards defence. Finally Mr. Greenwood's statement itemises the various forms of minority safeguards which are to be incorporated in the new Constitution. These include an ombudsman to be appointed initially by a non-Mauritian Governor-General, and a provision in the defence treaty that Britain will be called in if internal security is threatened.

4. We are told by Terrell (Colonial Office) that produced the British have in mind a Professor Mackenzie, Professor of Government at Manchester University, to lead the electoral commission. Another prospective member (Hucks) previously served at the date of the British Guiana electoral commission. Terrell said that the

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unlikely that the commission would proceed to Mauritius much before the end of November. This meant that the Mauritians might be hard put to hold their elections much before the end of April. Indeed given the probable need to redraw constituency boundaries and prepare voters' rolls on noncommunal lines, it might be necessary to defer an election until May or June. This, Terrell agreed, would barely give time to allow the target date for independence (the end of 1966) to be met.

5. Terrell added that it was, of course, by no means certain that the electoral commission would be able to devise a suitable formula. Nor for that matter could anyone predict with absolute certainty that independence for Mauritius would necessarily ensue. The Governor assessed that the bulk of the Franco-Mauritians had now resigned themselves to the inevitability of independence. But he had doubts about the Creoles. In any case, the Parti Mauricien was likely to campaign in the election on an anti-independence ticket and it was conceivable, though perhaps not likely, that they and their supporters might gain a majority in the Legislative Assembly. If so, the projected resolution from the Assembly asking for independence might never see the light of day.

6. For the PM to muster the requisite majority in the Assembly to block independence they would need the support not only of the other minorities but also of a proportion of the Hindus. This support was unlikely to be forthcoming even granted that many Hindus, freed of party considerations, might be disposed to favour the PM's formula for association in preference to independence. Moreover, it was unlikely that the PM would receive the backing they would need from the Moslems. The latter have virtually pawned their souls to Rangoon in exchange for a promise of a guaranteed minimum representation in Parliament. Initially, the Labour Party was disposed to allow the Moslems' demand for separate voting lists. But this was denied by the Conference when the PM argued that, if one minority was to have reserved seats, all communities must have them. The PM's position at the Conference, incidentally, was to support proportional representation. An element of this, Terrell thought, was almost certain to be incorporated into the electoral system recommended by the electoral commission.

7. Turning to the security question, Terrell said that the situation in the colony was at present quiet. Communal relations indeed had improved in recent weeks. The security outlook, however, must depend mainly on the behaviour of the PM and other groups opposed to independence. As you know, the PM staged a walk-out at the end of the London Conference, boycotting the final session. Since then they have been assiduously propagating a vehemently anti-British line, claiming that the Colonial Secretary, in refusing to consider their demand for a referendum on the independence issue, had ignored "the rights of the people". All in all, it seemed that fears of permanent political subjugation had not been stilled, and the eruption of violence last May showed that tension was not too far beneath the surface. All this suggested that the PM might be tempted to create trouble in the period between now and the election. But Terrell thought that it was reasonable to assume that those holding office in the all-party government would not lightly abandon this vantage point, at least until the electoral commission had produced its recommendations, since it was possible that those now opposed to independence might reconcile themselves to it given an electoral system favourable to themselves. Terrell concluded that the date on which the electoral commission would report might thus be crucial to any security assessment. It was unlikely that the

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commission could report before the end of this year. Possibly their report might be delayed until well into 1966. Meanwhile the commitment of the company of British troops to remain in Mauritius at least until December should have a stabilising effect.

8. A copy of this memorandum has been sent to Dar Es Salaam.

Lance Joseph,
for Senior External Affairs Representative.

The Australian High Commission,
Dar Es Salaam.

Referred for information.


Lance Joseph.

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and his colleague. They asked René on several occasions what he truly thought about independence to which René had replied that "perhaps the Seychelles were in fact too small" for full sovereignty. At one time he said that neither he nor his party wanted independence.

5. Seller noted that the inconsistencies of this with René's previous public posturing was the greater in that at SPUP's first party congress held last month (with René in control) party members had declared themselves for "independence within the shortest possible time." Further, in his summing-up speech, René was reported to have said he would be prepared to "brook no stalling tactics by our colonial masters."

6. Seller said that in fact, of course, few Seychellois were convinced that independence was for them. The population was much too small and the economy much too vulnerable. Moreover, for centuries the remote Seychelles islands had slept in sunshine and solitude with little contact^{with} and thus little wish to emulate, the outside world. As against this, Seller observed that some of the islanders could not help but become infected by the fever of independence now blowing two ways across the Indian Ocean from Africa and Asia. Seller added that, in any case, the British had learnt over the past decade that never was the one word to exclude from the colonial vocabulary. Like a slalom course, the process of decolonisation seemed to have its own momentum, which made it impossible to opt out as the final bends hurtled into sight.

7. Seller said that, for the present, however, the British were basing their policy on the assumption that the Seychelles would remain a dependent territory. This did not rule out the possibility of some kind of constitutional advance and indeed, as a result of the recommendations of Mr. Berkley and Mrs. Jeger, it was likely that the Secretary of State might approve the despatch of a constitutional expert to Victoria to advise on constitutional reform. Seller suggested that obvious reforms which might be introduced were universal adult suffrage (which would in fact be not much more than a gesture, since the existing franchise was open to virtually anyone who could write his name), an increase in the number of elected members and nominated unofficials in the Legislative and Executive Councils, and perhaps the implementation of a "member" system to associate the locals more closely with the process decision making ~~and~~ administration. Seller speculated that it might in years to come even be possible to introduce a quasi-ministerial system of government, but he thought it doubtful that a constitutional adviser would ever recommend internal self-government on the Mauritius pattern.

8. Noting that a by-election for one of the seats to the Legislative Council was soon to take place, Seller commented that this would provide the first test of electoral strength between the SPUP and SDP. Who won would be the party who managed to shake the most voters out of their customary apathy; turnouts at polls in the past had been assessed to be large if 20 per cent of those qualified to vote actually voted. René, sensing the importance of political canvassing, had been stumping up and down the islands for weeks now warning darkly of the evils of a "coconut mentality."

9. Seller commented that René had admitted to Mr. Berkley and Mrs. Jeger that his party received some financial support from the 7-8,000 Seychellois who lived and worked in East Africa. He also claimed that the SPUP had a paid-up membership of nearly 2000 in the Seychelles. There was in fact no way to check on this figure, and the Colonial Office doubted whether there were that many regularly paying membership dues. Seller added that since the fracas last year at the US satellite tracking station, British officials had been keeping tabs on the SPUP leaders. The Governor

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was known to feel slightly uneasy about the composition of the SPUP executive which included a number of suspected thugs and others who actually had criminal records.

10. The leadership of the SDP, by contrast, was fairly respectable. Jimmy Mancham himself was the son of a wealthy Chinese Seychellois family who had developed over the years something of a "social conscience." The SDP was also now supported by prominent members of the former Taxpayers and Producers Association, including Mrs. Hilda Stevenson-Delhomme, one of the Seychelles most respected citizens. Sellar thought that the only doubtful quantity in the SDP was the deputy leader Goubert. Unlike most other political figures in the Seychelles, Goubert was quite black, and this gave him something of a colour complex. A recent manifestation of this had occurred during Sellar's visit to the islands, when Goubert became involved in an argument with the management of a bar in Victoria. He had alleged that the bar had refused to serve him for fear of offending Americans from the satellite tracking station who had been sitting drinking with their wives. In fact, Sellar said, there had been no substance in these allegations. But they went to show Goubert's habit of easily taking offence where matters of race might be involved. Sellar said that Goubert was soon to come to Britain for a twelve-month course in trade unionism. This would expose him to the influence of sophisticated and liberal opinion. It was thus quite possible that when he returned Goubert would beat the colour drum harder. Sellar added that Jimmy Mancham was probably secretly relieved at the prospect of Goubert's lengthy absence from the Seychelles; during Mancham's recent four months' absence in the U.S., Goubert had tended very much to assume control of things.

11. In reply to our question about elections, Sellar said these were not due until mid-1967. However, since the elections of June 1963 were held before the SDP and SPUP were formed, it was likely that the Secretary of State might try to advance the date for the next election. The two parties which fought the 1963 election - TAPA and the Seychelles Islanders United Party - were incidentally now defunct. Broadly speaking, however, the division in Seychelles society which these two groups had represented continued to exist. TAPA, which had comprised the European plantation owners and other tax-paying classes, had stood for internal self-government, speedier localisation of the civil service, and the cutting of taxes, especially the export duty on agricultural products. This programme had been opposed by the SIUP (which had represented mainly the working, but some middle classes) who saw it as a bid by the "grand blanc" to take over the management of the administration with the view to cutting back on social services and government expenditure generally, the object being to reduce their tax burdens. It was partly a manifestation of this fear that some elements in the SDP were still nervous about further steps towards local autonomy.

12. In a comment on the Seychelles development programme, Sellar said that emphasis was now being placed on land settlement. This involved the buying up by the Administration of large estates and their division among smallholders. Average plot size was 5 acres and each plot was provided with a model cottage. The settlers, in addition to providing their own subsistence, grew export crops such as coconut and cinnamon, and also each kept one or two head of cattle. Ultimately, through this way, it was hoped to cure the Seychelles' unemployment problem. A large number of peasant farmers, owning their own plots of land, should also help make for future political stability.

13. A copy of this memorandum is being sent to Dar-es-Salaam.

Australian High Commission,
Dar-es-Salaam

Referred for information.

Lance Joseph
(Lance Joseph)

(Lance Joseph)
for Senior External Affairs Representative

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SENATE

QUESTION FOR THIS DAY

24th August 1965.

Question No. 507

Senator Mulvihill asked the Minister representing the Minister for External Affairs upon notice:

- (1) Have the tensions recently existing on the island of Mauritius lessened?
- (2) Are units of the Coldstream Guards still stationed on the island?

Answer

Senator Gorton: The Minister for External Affairs has furnished the following replies:

- (1) Yes. The state of emergency which had been declared in May 1965 was lifted on 1st August.
- (2) The Coldstream Guards company transferred to Mauritius in May has been replaced by a Company of the Gloucester Regiment which is still on the island.

(F)

OUTWARD - CABLEGRAM

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OUTWARD CABLE

SECRET

18th August, 1965.

To External Canberra

repeated savingram Austcom Dar-es-Salaam

No. 7179

7179

From External

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MAURITIUS

Our 7166. Following assessment of prospects for forthcoming Mauritius constitutional conference was provided today by Trafford Smith, Assistant Under Secretary at the Colonial Office. Trafford Smith prefaced his remarks by observing that all political parties in Mauritius recognized role played by British in holding balance between various communities in the island. This was as much an article of faith for the majority Hindu Indians as for the minority "general population". Hindus, of course, viewed uneasily preponderance of Creoles in the security forces and their concentration in the UR_{ban} areas.

2. Ramgoolam and his Labour Party professed to want independence. In this, they were supported (equivocally) by Independent Forward Bloc and Moslem Committee of Action. All three groups, however, envisaged an independence tied to a defence treaty which would enable Mauritian Government to call on Britain for assistance in maintenance of internal security. In effect, Labour Party and its allies were seeking permissive mandate to invoke British help if independence should go wrong.

3. The Parti Mauricien would like Mauritius to be integrated into the UK along lines of the formula worked out for Malta in mid 50's. They regarded integration as best means of ensuring against Hindu take-over. It had, however, been made quite clear to Parti Mauricien that integration would not be acceptable to British Parliament. Hence minds in Parti Mauricien were now turning towards thoughts of "free association" under which Mauritius would associate itself voluntarily with the UK leaving British with constitutional obligation to preserve internal security. Parti Mauricien leaders say they will have no truck with Ramgoolam's proposal for a British guarantee to respond to requests for assistance; they want Britain to be actually responsible for internal security in Mauritius. They also want Britain to remain final

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arbiters over working of Mauritius Constitution.

4. Trafford Smith commented that ideas of both "free association" and defence treaty presented difficulties for British Government. Trouble with "free association" was that no one had yet defined what this meant in terms of UN resolution 1541. There was no precedent to go on; Wellington had not yet produced constitutional instruments for proposed "free association" of Cook Islands with New Zealand. ^{0.5.74} Proposal by Duval and co that Britain should retain final responsibility for maintenance of inter-communal peace and a watchdog function over the Constitution would almost certainly meet with UN criticism. So would Parti Mauricien's suggestion that any association agreement should be immutable and binding on future generations. As Colonial Office understood it, UN resolution 1541 qualified acceptability of voluntary association concept with rider that territory "associated" must be free to terminate arrangement and proceed to independence at any time. Obviously, however, Parti Mauricien were not going to accept "safeguards" in London which the Hindus could immediately repudiate on returning to Mauritius. Feeling of British Ministers, Trafford Smith added, was that need to reconcile any quasi-independent status for Mauritius with UN pronouncements was only a secondary consideration. RMG would probably settle for any agreement which met desiderata of UK and respective Mauritian parties.

5. As for Ramgoolam's idea of a defence treaty covering internal security, Trafford Smith observed this was unlikely to endear itself to Defence Ministry, already under tremendous pressure to reduce commitments. Moreover, British undertaking to preserve internal peace in a colony - over which, in final analysis, Britain could exercise control - was one thing. Commitment to do same when Britain was powerless to influence events which led to situation getting out of hand in first place was quite another.

6. With so many conflicting interests involved, Trafford Smith speculated that best forecast of what would emerge from Lancaster House next month might be agreement to shelve issue of island's final constitutional status (perhaps pending settlement at a referendum) and concentration instead on question of advance to full self-government. Trafford Smith added that some days might need to be spent in convincing Parti Mauricien of hopelessness of their ideas for integration. He said that informal soundings taken at Westminster had shown British political parties to be of one on this. They all foresaw difficulties about immigration, apart from which all three parties said they would be unwilling to allow situation to emerge in which Government of Britain could be decided by votes of people from overseas territories.

7. Trafford Smith concluded by observing that difficulties at Lancaster House were likely to be the greater now that

Mauritians had decided to throw bone of the projected Anglo-American Indian Ocean defence facilities on to conference table (our telegram 7165). Ramgoolam had dropped broad hints that Labour Party's cooperation in this matter would be dependent on UK being forthcoming over his request for satisfactory defence treaty. There had also been indications Mauritians might be intending to exploit Britain's use of Plaisance airfield and need for communications installations located on the island as bargaining counters at constitutional talks. Trafford Smith added, with respect to Anglo-American defence facilities, that Mauritians seemed adamant about not ceding, but only leasing, Chagos Archipelago. Governor had also been unable to talk them out of pressing for increased US sugar quota and agreement on increased immigration into UK and US. Ramgoolam had indeed suggested British should convene meeting of UK, US, and Mauritian Ministers to discuss these matters.

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Distribution: A/High Commissioner
A/Official Secretary
External Affairs



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OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA

TEMPLE BAR 2435

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
STRAND,
LONDON, W.C.2.

In reply quote No. 3/12/86/1

Memo No. 1135

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
Canberra.

23rd. July, 1965.

MAURITIUS

It will be recalled (our memo 971) that the Colonial Secretary sent a despatch to the Governor of Mauritius on 8th June urging that the Mauritian political parties use the time before the projected constitutional conference to try to establish as much agreement (on "the direction which future constitutional development should take") locally as possible. Mr. Greenwood also expressed the hope that the all-party Government might find it possible to subscribe to a single document setting out the areas of agreement and disagreement between the parties.

2. Terrell (Colonial Office) told us today that, in three meetings with the island's political leaders, the Governor had so far been unable to persuade the latter to follow the Secretary of State's advice. It had been impossible to get preliminary discussions under way between the various parties, and no attempt had yet been made by the all-party Government to draw up a paper identifying the areas of dispute. Sir John Rennie had indeed now decided to try his own hand at drafting a paper with the view to obtaining the parties' agreement that it should go forward as a conference document.

3. The main protagonists, the Parti Mauricien and the Mauritius Labour Party, in the meantime, were manoeuvring to establish their separate cases in preparation for the Constitutional Conference due to open in London on 8th September. The Parti Mauricien had set the pattern when it decided to enlist as a consultant on ideas for "integration with the UK" an Oxford don named Carter. Mr. Jules Koenig, the Parti Mauricien leader who was currently in the UK for medical treatment, had taken the opportunity to have several rounds of discussions with Carter, and it now seemed likely that the Parti Mauricien would ask to have Carter included as one of their representatives at the Constitutional Conference.

4. Not to be outdone, Dr. Ramgoolam was now negotiating for an adviser for the Labour Party. He had in mind an American academic at present working for the Kenya Government. This man had been proposed to the Labour Party by Tom Mboya, when Mboya and Bruce MacKenzie visited Mauritius recently. The Kenyans, Terrell added, had lately been displaying a good deal of interest in Mauritian developments. The public explanation for Mboya's visit - to explore the possibilities of Mauritius as an export market - was only half of it. It seemed virtually certain that Mboya took the initiative in suggesting that the MLP look to Kenya for a constitutional adviser. Sir John Rennie, on his way back to Mauritius from a short visit to Britain, was at present in Nairobi discussing with the Kenyans the proposed appointment of an adviser to the MLP.

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5. When asked to elaborate on the ideas of the Parti Mauricien, Terrell said that what the PM would really like would be a continuation of the status quo with Britain controlling internal security, racial representation in the Legislature and Executive, and credible checks against Hindu domination. Realising, however, that Mauritius could not retain its current "twilight" constitutional status indefinitely, the PM were now advancing proposals for full integration with Britain as the only way to head off a Hindu take-over. When Mr. Greenwood visited Mauritius in April he was told that the PM wanted a resident chief administrator to be appointed by the Home Secretary, but otherwise for Mauritius to be regarded as an integral part of the UK, sending representatives to Westminster, rendering taxes to HM Exchequer and participating in the British annual budget. PM leaders said that their proposals also envisaged free movement of population between the UK and Mauritius and the gradual extension to the island of British social services. Duval had left the Colonial Secretary in no doubt that what the PM would resist uncompromisingly was independence - which they equated with Hindu domination, which the Franco-Mauritians claimed would lead to nationalisation of the sugar industry, and which the Creoles, a large proportion of whom held jobs in the civil service, professional and education fields, believed would lead to Indianisation with attendant loss of employment opportunities for themselves. Fears about employment opportunities for themselves. Fears about employment were compounded by the evidence of the population explosion (for which again the fertile Indians were blamed) and the island's utter dependence on its sugar economy. Terrell added, in reply to our query, that the recent disturbances had if anything made the rejection of independence by the PM more emphatic and its demands for the maintenance of strong constitutional links with Britain more insistent.

6. The MLP in the meantime continued to speak out against any form of integration, which they argued would mean a reduction of the powers and privileges now enjoyed by the Government. Instead the MLP demanded complete independence (with built-in safeguards for minorities), and the sooner the better. But, Terrell observed, there was something fundamentally bogus about this demand for independence. Indeed, it was fairly certain that Ramgoolam and his Ministers did not want independence at all, but only the trappings of sovereignty. At least insofar as the MLP "old-guard" were concerned, they would be satisfied if they could get something which, while leaving their sovereignty circumscribed, nevertheless allowed them to attend international conferences as representatives of an independent state. In short, what the MLP leadership wanted was the prestige of independence; something which would allow, for instance, Ramgoolam to look his friend Kenyatta in the face without feeling inferior. Of real independence, however, they, and he, were frankly terrified. Ramgoolam indeed had admitted as much when he told the Secretary of State that he would "expect" after independence that the British would intervene, if they ever came to think it necessary, to save him from a Creole coup. When Mr. Greenwood had jokingly suggested that the UK would at least need a request for assistance before intervening, Ramgoolam had replied, obviously seriously, that "that would be no good. I might one day wake up to find myself a prisoner unable to ask for help". Terrell thought that the importance of this equivocal attitude was that it held out the prospect for some flexibility on the MLP side at Lancaster House in September.

7. For the PM also, there was just a chance they would agree to compromise. When Duval outlined to the Colonial Secretary last April his ideas on integration, he admitted under questioning that these demands were the PM's "maximum"

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position, the implication being that the PM did not really expect to have all its demands conceded. And, indeed, since April the PM had been left in little doubt that integration was not something that either British Ministers or the British Parliament would be disposed to accept.

8. What, however, both Ministers and Parliament might be prepared to look at would be a "Western Samoa" solution for Mauritius. This would entail Mauritius first attaining independence and then entering voluntarily into an arrangement with the UK which involved the island's Government ceding certain powers (perhaps including residual authority over internal security, as well as the more normal cession of external, defence, and juridical powers) to HMG. The commitment would need to be one which permitted termination of the arrangement, following a minimum period of notice, by either Britain or Mauritius at any time. Alternatively - and this would approximate more the MLP position - the UK might negotiate a defence and foreign relations agreement whereby Britain was delegated to act in certain fields on the request of Mauritius. This would allow the Mauritius Government, in cases where it so wished, to enter into direct political and economic arrangements with other states, and would permit separate representation by Mauritius in the UN and other international forums, thus meeting the MLP desire for status and prestige.

9. It would be for the forthcoming London Conference to decide what best suited the requirements of Mauritius. As far as the British were concerned, they would accept virtually anything ~~short of~~ integration. The difficulty would be to convince the non-MLP representatives that anything less would guarantee them against a Hindu take-over. Terrell commented that, given this deep-rooted fear of Hindu domination, and thus the likelihood of trouble if Mauritius should be cut adrift prematurely, the Secretary of State might decide that the British should at the Conference also set themselves against complete independence. In that case, discussion was likely to centre around the types of solution described in para 8 above. Terrell added that one thing the British would certainly hope to see emerge from the conference would be agreement for immediate internal self-government. Such a step was foreshadowed in the last London Conference held in July 1961. For the rest, if the MLP and PM were unable to reach agreement at the conference table, it might be possible to secure acceptance that at some date in the future the electorate should be asked to give its opinion.

10. Duval, Terrell said, had been advocating a referendum for some time. He apparently felt that, in any choice between independence or association with Britain, the bulk of Mauritians would opt for the latter. Terrell said the British were not so sure. Though there was no mass freedom movement of the kind known in Africa, the fever of independence, blowing two ways across the Indian Ocean from Africa and Asia, had undoubtedly infected many Hindus in Mauritius. Moreover, it was likely that the MLP leadership, despite private doubts, would, if it came to a referendum, be forced to throw the whole weight of the party machine behind a drive for independence. Otherwise, the leadership would risk losing the support of the rank-and-file and of the younger elements of the party who were much more vocal than their elders about the need for independence. There was, it was well to recall, a communist-sympathising section of the Travailleurs who would welcome the chance to denounce Ramgoolam for lack of fibre.

11. As against the above, Terrell agreed that the electoral strength of the PM could not be ignored. Recent

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successes in by-elections lent credence to the PM's claim to multi-racial support. Then there was the success of their rally at the time of Mr. Greenwood's visit, when Duval managed to gather together almost a quarter of the island's population to demonstrate against independence. Moreover, two thirds of Mauritius was Indian should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the Indian community was by no means homogeneous politically. There were, in fact, four major Indian parties: the Committee for Moslem Action, the Independent Forward Bloc, the Tamil United Party, and the Labour Party, which though the largest, did not now have a majority in the Legislature. Only the latter stood (equivocally) for independence, the others being either opposed or as yet uncommitted.


12. Concluding, Terrell mentioned that the Governor in Mauritius was intending to lift the state of emergency in a week or two, when the cane cutting season would be over and the possibilities of racial strife thus less. It was not, however, intended to remove the stabilising presence of the company of British troops until after the constitutional conference. All political leaders had publicly welcomed the despatch of the troops to the island, and indeed most Mauritians displayed apprehension whenever the possibility of the troops being withdrawn was mooted.

13. A copy of this memorandum has been sent to Dar-es-Salaam.

(Lance Joseph)
for Senior External Affairs Representative

Australian High Commission,
DAR ES SALAAM.

Referred for your information.


(Lance Joseph)

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OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
STRAND,
LONDON, W.C.2.

In reply quote No.

3/12/86/1

Confidential

24th June 1965

Memo no. 956

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
Canberra ACT

Mauritius

The following item in this week's Current Review of Intelligence might be of interest:

"Certain causes of the disturbances in early May can now be identified. No evidence has come to light that they were planned or that they were exploited by any Communist or external influences.

Political excitement had increased considerably as the result of party political propaganda on the question of independence during and after the Colonial Secretary's visit in April and reflected differences of outlook mainly between the Franco-Mauritians and Creoles on the one hand and the Indian population on the other. Inflamed by irresponsible newspaper articles, political controversy had become increasingly identified with communal differences and these rose to a head in the particular incidents of early May. One, at least, of these incidents appears to have been exacerbated by the presence of political bullies, many with criminal records, employed as "strong-arm men" by Duval, Deputy Leader of the Parti-Mauricien. Such persons have also been employed for some time past by Walter, a Minister and member of the Mauritius Labour Party, and also by Mohammed, Leader of the Muslim Committee of Action. Duval's men had foolishly been sent by him to an area of tension in the role of "protectors". At the same time an extremist Hindu group (the All Mauritius Hindu Congress) took advantage of the tension to complain against every grievance, real or imaginary, of the Hindu community in an inflammatory fashion.

So long as the military reinforcement remains, it is unlikely that violence on the scale of early May will recur though tensions will remain and could grow in the months leading to the September constitutional conference."

2. A copy of this memorandum is being sent to
Dar-es-Salaam.
Australian High Commission,
Dar-es-Salaam

Referred for information. (Lance Joseph)
for Senior External Affairs Representative

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OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA

TEMPLE BAR 2435

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE

AUSTRALIA HOUSE

STRAND

LONDON, W.C.2

In reply quote No.

3/12/86/1

Memo. No. 97)

29th June, 1965

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
Canberra.

Mauritius

... We refer to paragraph 11 of our memorandum 863 and attach a copy of the Colonial Secretary's despatch to Mauritius inviting Mauritian political leaders to a constitutional conference which he suggests should begin in London on 7th September.

2. A copy of the despatch has been sent to Dar-Es-Salaam.

(Lance Joseph)
for Senior External Affairs Representative

Australian High Commission,
Dar-Es-Salaam.

Referred for your information.

LJ

(Lance Joseph)

Published in Mauritius 25.6.65

COLONIAL OFFICE,
LONDON, S.W.1.

8 June, 1965.

Sir,

I have the honour to address you on the subject of the future constitutional development of Mauritius. During my recent visit I had extensive discussions with the Premier and the leaders of all the parties represented in the Legislature. I am most grateful to them and to many others who were good enough to give me their views on the problems which now confront the people of Mauritius.

2. The overriding impression with which I was left was the need to end as quickly as possible the present period of uncertainty. Divergent views are current as to the direction which future constitutional development should take; and it is understandable that until firm decisions can be reached, based upon the widest possible measure of agreement, there should persist a malaise which has doubtless contributed to recent civil disturbances, of which I have learned with distress, and which are foreign to the reputation for goodwill and orderly behaviour which Mauritius has earned over many years.

3. You will recall that it was agreed at the talks held in London under the Chairmanship of Lord Lansdowne in February 1964 that the next conference should be held "during the third year counting from the elections held in October 1963, i.e. at any convenient time after October 1965". It happens that I should not be free, because of other commitments, to preside at a Conference in October, though I could do so in the early part of September. I should be grateful therefore if, on my behalf, you would convey to the Premier, and to the other leaders of Parties represented in the Legislature, an invitation to attend a Constitutional Conference in London during September, and suggest to them that Tuesday, 7th September would be an appropriate date for the opening session. I should welcome your early recommendations as to the numbers of representatives which the various Parties should bring.

4. With regard to the Agenda of the Conference, paragraphs 4 and 5 of the 1964 Communiqué indicate the range of matters for discussion. It will be for delegates to advise me as to whether it is the wish of the people of Mauritius to go ahead, in the words of paragraph 5 of the communiqué "as an independent state, or in some form of special association either with the United Kingdom or with other independent Commonwealth countries"; and I wish to make it plain that no proposals for the constitutional future of the island are ruled out in advance.

5. It does appear however that consideration of the question of the ultimate status of Mauritius has now reached the point where specific alternatives are emerging. The main task of the Conference should therefore be to endeavour to reach agreement on this status, the timing of accession to it, whether such accession should be preceded by consultation with the people, and if so in what form. The Conference

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GOVERNOR

SIR JOHN REMMIE, K.C.M.G., O.B.E.

ETC., ETC., ETC.

will of course also consider the changes in the constitution required by full internal self-government, it being understood that these may well be affected by the final view reached on the question of future status. The electoral system and any constitutional changes which this might involve would also have to be decided upon and Professor de Smith's report will provide a useful basis for discussion.

6. Before leaving Mauritius I expressed to you, and to the leaders of the main parties separately, the urgent hope that they would use the period before the Conference for serious thought and discussion with one another, so as to reach agreement locally, where possible, and to identify the more difficult points which would need to be resolved at the Conference. I hope that the all-party Government may find it possible to subscribe to a single document setting out the areas of agreement and disagreement. You undertook to do all you could to further preliminary discussions to this end, and I trust that it will be possible to do much useful preparatory work in this way. I believe that if the Party leaders will co-operate with you in setting practical discussions of this kind in motion, that will of itself do much to reduce the tension which has been so evident.

7. In connection with these preliminary discussions a number of particular points arise. In regard to the Labour Party's proposals, I note that a desire has been expressed for a continuing close link with Britain; if by this is meant some special relationship with Britain over and above the relationship all members of the Commonwealth have with each other, I am sure that it would be valuable if before the Conference the implications of such a relationship could be worked out in some detail; similarly, if the Labour Party contemplated suggesting further safeguards for minorities, it would I am sure be helpful if these could be formulated now. As regards the Parti Mauricien's proposals, reference has been made to both "integration" and "association", and some of their detailed proposals appear more akin to the former, others to the latter. It would I am sure be of assistance if further clarification of the Parti Mauricien's wishes could be obtained and if the distinction between the concepts of integration and association could be recognised. As regards the Independent Forward Bloc and the Muslim Committee of Action, these parties would no doubt also welcome further clarification of the Labour Party's and the Parti Mauricien's proposals and, in defining their own particular wishes, would no doubt wish to consider how best these might be reconciled with the main alternatives which so far appear to be under discussion.

8. In the short remaining period before the Conference a heavy responsibility rests on everyone in Mauritius, and particularly on the Party leaders, the Press, and all who are in a position to influence opinion, to think of the interests of Mauritius as a whole, and to avoid doing or saying anything that might increase tension between sections of all communities.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient
humble servant,

ANTHONY GREENWOOD



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AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION
9 KUTCHERY ROAD,
KARACHI.

In reply quote No. 226/23

Memorandum No. 795.

17th June, 1965.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

MAURITIUS

(Our memorandum No. 24 of 12th January, 1965;
your file 155/7/13/2)

In early April, 1965, Mr. Amid Korimbocus, the self-styled leader of the Mauritian Muslim Democratic League, reappeared in Karachi on the second stage of his mission to Pakistan, the main purpose of which appears to be to enlist Pakistan protection of the "oppressed Muslims" in Mauritius from the "India-dominated" Hindu community. (Both Muslims and Hindus in Mauritius originate from the sub-continent and have carried their historic animosities with them.) In the course of his activities he has managed to achieve a fairly responsive press, and, at one stage, even seemed to have obtained a sympathetic reception from the Government. Fortunately, it seems that his run of good luck may soon come to an end.

2. Shortly after his arrival, Mr. Korimbocus called a series of press conferences in which he alleged "atrocities" were being meted out to the Muslims in Mauritius. These were said to include kidnapping and rape of Muslim girls, restriction of cow-slaughtering and the prohibition of semi-religious Muslim greetings. Mr. Korimbocus called for a Constitution to safeguard the interests of the Muslim minority, including a separate Muslim electorate, guaranteed proportional representation in the Government, and the banning of Muslim missionaries and Islamic literature from India. In a series of increasingly wilder statements, he also claimed that the people of Mauritius "looked with disapproval" on the "Anglo-American" air base, which, he said, had been built with Israeli money, and he was also reported as stating that India was trying to make Mauritius its first colony "in conspiracy with the United States, Britain and Israel".

3. Mr. Korimbocus then formed in Pakistan a body known as the "Organisation for the Protection of World Muslim Minorities". On 8th April the organisation publicly appealed to the United Nations to send a special mission to Mauritius to study the "uncivilised treatment" of the Muslim community, and, inter alia, urged the British Government to accept Mr. Korimbocus' demands for Muslim rights and privileges, and to consult Mr. Korimbocus' Democratic Muslim League before preparing a Constitution for Mauritius. In a further resolution the organisation demanded the immediate removal of the air base, and threw in a few gratuitous demands on Kashmir, Cyprus, Palestine and Aden.

4. The result of this propaganda was that a number of editorials eventually appeared, mostly in the vernacular press, supporting Mr. Korimbocus' constitutional demands and demanding Pakistan protection for Mauritian Muslims. These included a leading article in the main English-language newspaper in East Pakistan (copy attached) supporting these views and working them into a denunciation of Western moves to establish "a nuclear base" in Diego Garcia and to consolidate the vestiges of "imperialism" east of Suez.

5. On the official level, also, it seemed that Mr. Korimbocus was, at one time, on the ascendant; although we do not think that he managed to gain the ear of the Foreign Ministry, he was seen at official receptions and dinners, on one occasion occupying a seat near Mr. Bhutto. (This may have come about, however, because of Mr. Bhutto's role as Secretary-General of the Pakistan Muslim League.)

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6. Possibly as a result of these activities, the Pakistan High Commissioner in Nairobi, Mr. Panni, was instructed to visit Mauritius and investigate the Muslim case. (Following the serious rioting in Mauritius in early May, the British Government had some reservations about Mr. Panni proceeding there; however, on the advice of Sir Morrice James, the visit went ahead at the end of May.)

7. During his call on the Governor of Mauritius, Mr. Panni said that Pakistan had serious doubts about an independent Mauritius, which, he claimed, would be subject to Indian influence. He also said that Pakistan was not in favour of Mauritius being constitutionally linked with any of the mainland African nations. On the other hand Pakistan would support some sort of a tie with Britain, in the knowledge that under this arrangement a watchful eye would be kept over Muslim interests. Mr. Panni said he would try to exert his influence with the leaders of the main Mauritian Muslim party, the Muslim Committee of Action, with the object of favouring constitutional ties with Britain. The Pakistan High Commissioner made no reference to communication bases or to nuclear free zones.

8. Although we are not sure from the above account (given to us by the British High Commission) whether Mr. Panni was specifically warned off Mr. Korimbocus, it seems that he wisely chose to ignore the latter's claims to Muslim leadership. In this connection it is worth mentioning that the Governor of Mauritius has told the British High Commission in Karachi that Mr. Korimbocus is a very undesirable character. Amongst other poor records, he has been declared a bankrupt, for which he served a prison sentence, and was expelled from the Muslim Committee of Action. In January, 1965, he travelled to Britain to present demands to the Government, but was given no assistance or opportunity.

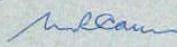
9. Our assessment of the present Pakistani position is, therefore, that while the Government has at present no reason to complain of the conditions in which the Muslim community lives in Mauritius, it continues to take an interest in it in the fear of eventual Indian influence over the island. Pakistan clearly supports the idea of an independent Mauritius linked to the United Kingdom. As for Mr. Korimbocus, it is still on the cards that he will continue to obtain favourable press treatment, but his influence with the Pakistan Government would seem to be very little, and if anything, particularly after Mr. Panni's journey, is likely to be on the wane.

M. R. Casson

(M.R. Casson)
Second SecretaryAustralian High Commission,
DAR-ES-SALAAM

Memo No. OD.36

Copy for your information.


(M.R. Casson)
Second Secretary

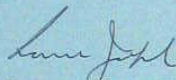
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Australian High Commission,
DAR-ES-SALAAM

*With the Compliments
of the
Senior External Affairs
Representative*

Referred for your information.


(Lance Joseph)

OFFICE OF THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE, STRAND,
LONDON, W.C.2

2nd June, 1965



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OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA

TEMPLE BAR 2435

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
STRAND,
LONDON, W.C.2.

In reply quote No.

MEMO. NO. 863.

2nd June, 1965

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

MAURITIUS - BACKGROUND TO LAST MONTH'S DISTURBANCES

Reviewing today the background to last month's disturbances in Mauritius, Pairelough, Head of the Colonial Office Indian Ocean Department, explained that the trouble flowed from the inter-communal tension and deep mutual distrust which underlay and pervaded the whole of Mauritian political life. What brought the tension to the surface had been Mr. Greenwood's visit to the island and the thought that this had provoked, that the umbrella of British rule was about to be removed. More specifically, the outburst of racial strife reflected the fear on the part of the "general population" that the U.K. intended to sell out to the majority Indo-Mauritians with the result that the Creoles would be thrown out of their jobs (and thus lose their present disproportionate influence in the direction of the island's affairs), and the Franco-Mauritians from their sugar estates under nationalisation. With 8,000 young people coming on to the labour market each year, and with the other familiar problems associated with over-population, everyone in Mauritius was afraid for his economic life, and this fear, coupled with the present political uncertainty, had stimulated the racial hatred that many never thought existed. In addition, all non-Hindu communities were concerned that independence would result in a threat to life and security as the fast-growing illiterate and destitute Hindu community began to try to assert its rights as an ever-increasing proportion of the population. In such a situation - a vulnerable one-crop island economy, overpopulated, and shared by several ethnic groups, each broadly differentiated by extremes of wealth and poverty - a head of steam was bound to build up before talks destined to lead to a change in the political status quo.

2. That, however, fears of Hindu hegemony were longstanding was evident from the long and bitter rearguard action both the Creoles and Franco-Mauritians had fought over the years against the inroads of democracy fostered by the British. Further evidence was provided by the composition of the present Government: inter-racial distrust necessitated representation in the Cabinet in proportion to communal strengths in the island; similarly, the composition of the Legislative Council had to be such as reflected the comparative strength of the various communities: the Hindus, with half the population, had half the seats; the 20,000 Chinese had one seat.

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3. Fairclough observed that minority fears were of course vastly exaggerated. The MLP had no intention of obliterating the rights of the other communities. The nationalisation of the sugar industry, for example, was not, and never had been, part of the Labour Party's programme. True, some of the extremists in the Party had occasionally hinted at eventual nationalisation, but Ramgoolam himself had explicitly denied any intentions in that direction and indeed, at the MLP's last annual conference, there had been an overwhelming vote against nationalisation of any industry. Fairclough thought that anxieties that independence would mean loss of special privilege were perhaps better founded. But it would be most surprising if the Labour Party was not sincere in its expressed wish to continue a policy of non-racialism in government employment, etc. The more rational members of the *Partie Mauricien* would indeed probably accept this. However, they would also argue that, whatever their original intentions, an Indian Government would be bound to come under pressure as time elapsed to introduce some form, however unofficial, of discrimination against non-Hindus. As for the Franco-Mauritians, even if they accepted that fears of precipitate nationalism were misplaced, they shared the anxiety of settlers everywhere that an efficient non-white bureaucracy would destroy the economy that they had been primarily responsible for building up. Thus, both Creoles and Franco-Mauritians insisted that the only acceptable constitutional safeguard for minorities would be one that provided for a continued British presence. This view was supported in varying degrees of enthusiasm by the Muslims, Sino-Mauritians and Tamils, and even by some Hindus.

4. Fairclough said that the origins of the most recent unrest could be traced back to last October when, immediately following the British general election, Gaetan Duval arrived in London to lobby the new Labour Ministers for integration of Mauritius into the U.K. This was the first occasion on which integration had been voiced as the official aim of the PM, and, when knowledge of Duval's activities filtered back to Mauritius, it gave rise to a sharp increase in the political tempo. Ramgoolam himself arrived in London in December with a request that the British Government convene a new constitutional conference as soon as possible for the purpose of setting a timetable for Mauritian independence. Ramgoolam argued at the time that only through independence could the spectre of communalism be laid forever. Following his London visit, the Mauritian Premier set off on an extended overseas tour - which took in East Africa, the U.A.R., India and Formosa - during the course of which he made several controversial statements advocating immediate independence for Mauritius and, as a variation, the incorporation of the island into an East African Federation. In Formosa, Ramgoolam even spoke of the island possibly being placed under some form of U.N. tutelage.

5. It was not surprising, Fairclough said, that these various pronouncements in turn should have provoked the PM to adopt a much more activist policy in Mauritius; the first three months of this year had accordingly seen the inauguration of a concerted campaign by Duval and his colleagues designed to

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propagate and popularise their ideas about integration. This, coupled with the fact that Ramgoolam was not physically present in the island to restrain his own Labour Party hot-heads, led to a polemical exchange between the PM and MLP in which the former were variously labelled as "stooges", "reactionaries" or "worse than the 'colons' in Algeria".

6. Thus the visit of the Colonial Secretary to Mauritius six weeks ago took place against a background of bitter recrimination and a mounting political temperature. This was evident from the day of Mr. Greenwood's arrival, when he was met at Curepipe, the second town, by a mammoth demonstration of about 150,000 supporters of the PM. This was an organizational triumph for Duval, who had managed to mobilise something like one half of the island's Creole population. What made the rally the more impressive was the fact that the crowd included some thousands of Moslems, Hindus and Chinese, demonstrating that the recent successes of the PM in local elections were matched by the increased multi-racial character of the party.

7. News of the turnout at Curepipe forced the Labour Party to muster along the route some 70,000 Indians for a counter-demonstration and, while this was not nearly so impressive, it inevitably provoked a further rise in the political temperature. Indeed it was after Mr. Greenwood's car had passed that the first rumblings of serious unrest were heard. The Indians began to throw stones at passing cars occupied by Creoles and some 80 persons were slightly injured.

8. Serious disturbances, however, did not take place until the next month when May Day processions in Grand Gaube and Plaine Verte degenerated into a free-for-all, and when the uneasy peace which followed erupted over May 10th/11th into violent racial clashes that left four dead and scores injured.

9. Fairclough cautioned that it would nevertheless be wrong to take too exaggerated a view of the extent of the disturbances. For the most part, they were confined to stone throwing, the overturning of the odd car, rumour mongering, and the gathering of excited crowds. Moreover, at no time had there been anything approaching an organized campaign of unrest. In all cases it had been thug elements on the fringe of the various political parties (particularly hooligan elements from within the PM) who had been responsible for the trouble. The party leaders themselves co-operated fully with the Governor in his attempts to restore order, and many went out on the streets urging restraint. Fairclough thought it was also worth emphasizing that the situation had been handled throughout by the Mauritian police. The British troops sent to the island had not been involved in any operational role. The value of their presence had been mainly psychological in that, by making themselves obtrusively obvious, they had assisted towards the restoration of confidence. Their presence had also allowed the Commissioner of Police to deploy his full manpower to maximum effect. As for the declaration of the state of emergency, Fairclough explained this had been decided upon to facilitate the bringing to book of those individuals

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responsible for the disturbances. There had been no further trouble since the emergency was declared, and according to Rennie's latest assessment, things seemed to be simmering down. The Governor had warned, however, that the basic situation of inter-communal tension remained unchanged, and that thus the risk of fresh flare-ups between now and the constitutional conference could not be ~~estimated~~, excluded.

10. This then was where matters rested. The root cause of the disturbances was still present, and with politics communally based and politics getting hotter, further clashes were quite on the cards. The only encouraging factor was that the incidents had not been incited or organized by political parties as such, so that trouble which might arise was still likely to remain isolated and sporadic.

11. Looking ahead, Fairclough said it was intended that the Secretary of State would send to Mauritius in the next few days a despatch inviting the various political parties to a constitutional conference to begin in London on 7th September. The despatch would comment on the recent disturbances and address a strong exhortation to all Mauritians to avoid further communal clashes. The despatch would also invite the all-party government to commence early discussions amongst themselves with the view to presenting a single document in London indicating those matters on which the parties were in agreement, and listing those on which differences existed. Fairclough commented that the British object in suggesting all-party discussions at this stage was three-fold. Firstly, by isolating and laying bare the points of difference, the work of the conference in London should be simplified. Second, it was vitally necessary to get the conflicting parties talking amiably together if complete alienation of the two main races were to be avoided and if Mauritius were not to go the way of British Guiana. Third, there was a real risk that, unless talks were soon got going, the Coalition would fall apart. The Coalition was currently under severe internal strain, and several members of the Cabinet had warned the Governor that it was unlikely to hold together much longer.

12. Assuming it were successfully launched, Fairclough foresaw the theme of the conference as being independence versus integration. It was unlikely, however, that either of these would prove acceptable, and, probably, after the opening day the debate would focus on various degrees of independence and association. The PM attitude, as the British understood it, was that any settlement must ensure cast-iron guarantees against Indian domination. They professed to see such a guarantee only in the integration of Mauritius with Britain. But this proposal was totally unacceptable to the MLP, apart from which (see below) the British Parliament would be unlikely to agree to the idea. A possible compromise, and the one which the British were currently looking at, was a "Western Samoan" solution, under which the British might retain the remnants of authority over Mauritius through a treaty freely negotiated between the U.K. and an independent Mauritius. Alternatively, Mauritius might follow the Cook Islands in an association with the metropolitan power which, while leaving final and residual responsibility with Britain, would ensure that Mauritius had most of the appearance and trappings of

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independence. The Secretary of State, Fairclough explained, did not have a closed mind to any solution and would be saying so in his despatch to Mauritius.

13. Fairclough commented that one difficulty would be to reconcile any quasi-independent status for Mauritius with U.N. pronouncements on decolonisation. As the U.K. understood it, Resolution 1541 permitted the voluntary "association" of ex-colonial territories with the former metropolitan power, provided that the inhabitants of the territory had been consulted beforehand in some meaningful way, and that the territory could opt out of the "association" unilaterally and of its own volition. These conditions had been satisfied in the case of Western Samoa where the Samoan commitment was an open-ended one. Obviously, however, Duval and the PM were not going to accept "safeguards" in London which the MLP, because of their majority, could immediately repudiate on returning to Mauritius.

14. Fairclough emphasized in this respect that, while the MLP was still the largest party, the PM had gained considerably in strength since the last election in 1963. Moreover, what advantage the MLP had numerically was to some extent offset by the more multiracial image of the PM and by the fact that, on the question of Mauritius' constitutional future, most of the other minority parties backed the PM position. Much as a Labour Government in Britain might prefer it, it was thus not practical politics to think of cutting Mauritius adrift in defiance of the views of the PM.

15. Asked about Duval's suggestion that there should be a referendum in Mauritius with the choice of independence or integration, Fairclough confirmed that the PM leader had made this offer during the Secretary of State's visit in April. However, the suggestion had been rejected by Ramgoolam on the grounds that it was likely to exacerbate inter-communal tensions and perhaps leave a legacy of bitterness which would prove impossible in future years to eradicate. Fairclough observed that some kind of consultation with the electorate would presumably become inevitable, and he thought that the MLP would probably give way on this point at the September conference. He added by way of comment that, even in the unlikely event of a referendum producing a majority for integration, the British Parliament would nevertheless need some persuading to accept the idea, in view of the considerable adjustments which would be needed to reconcile two vastly differing societies and living standards. This was what eventually killed a similar suggestion for Malta in the 1950s; and in Malta's case the integrating territory was some 5,000 miles nearer and inhabited by Europeans with a relatively high standard of living. In 1955 also, there had been no Commonwealth Immigrants Act or Smethwicks.

16. A copy of this memorandum has been forwarded to Dar-Es-Salaam.

(Lance Joseph)
for Senior External Affairs Representative

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Australian High Commission,
DAR-ES-SALAAM

*With the Compliments
of the
Senior External Affairs
Representative*

Referred for your information.

Lance Joseph
(Lance Joseph)

OFFICE OF THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE, STRAND,
LONDON, W.C.2

10th May, 1965

*High Commissioner
to S.C.*

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completely unequivocal. *CONFIDENTIAL*

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OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA

TEMPLE BAR 2435

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
STRAND,
LONDON, W.C.2.

In reply quote No. 3/12/86/1

MEMO. NO. 727

10th May, 1965

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

MAURITIUS

Terrell (Colonial Office) today gave us an account of Mr. Greenwood's visit to Mauritius. He said that insofar as any conclusions had emerged, these were set out in Mr. Greenwood's written answer in the attached extract from Hansard. The Secretary of State "hoped" that Mauritian political leaders would agree to attend a constitutional conference later this year. At a press conference before his departure, Mr. Greenwood had told journalists that it was hoped to hold the conference in September. It now seemed, however, that this timing might be awkward. The annual conference of the British Labour Party (of which Mr. Greenwood was chairman) was due to be held in September. Also, politicians from British Guiana were to arrive that month for a further round of discussions on their constitutional problems.

2. Terrell said that most of the difficulties regarding attendance were being raised by the Partie Mauricien (PM), who had been saying, both at the time of the Secretary of State's visit and subsequently, that they would only participate in constitutional talks provided they were satisfied beforehand about the agenda, i.e. that it did not include the subject of independence. Terrell explained that the PM had taken the line during their talks with Mr. Greenwood that they would be satisfied with nothing less than a form of association with the U.K. Preferably this should take the form of complete integration, with Mauritius assuming the status of an English county. But if this were not possible, Mauritius should be granted a constitutional position similar to that occupied by the Channel Islands with the difference that Mauritius' Council of Ministers might remain (presided over by a deputy of the British Home Secretary) and that revenues collected in Mauritius should be handed over in toto to the British Treasury. The PM had agreed that it might be desirable that Mauritius initially be given special taxation treatment, but had said that this was not essential, and that Mauritius should certainly be prepared in the course of time to share the entire UK tax burden. They thought that Mauritius should elect two M.P.'s. to the House of Commons.

3. The view of the Mauritius Labour Party (MLP) as expressed to the Colonial Secretary was still that Mauritius should be granted independence within the Commonwealth. However, Labour Party leaders had been less adamant about this than previously, and indeed newspapers supporting the MLP had brought out several editorials during the Secretary of State's visit hinting that something less than full independence might after all be preferable. One paper spoke of a form of independence under which the Mauritius Government would "share" responsibility for defence and external affairs with HMG. Terrell commented that Ramgoolan himself had been visibly less enthusiastic about independence than on previous occasions, though at no stage had he been completely unequivocal. His main reason for wanting independence

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seemed to stem from the embarrassment he felt about Mauritius' colonial status when (as he was wont to do) he swanned around the world talking to various Afro-Asian leaders.

4. As for the other parties, Terrell said they had been models of confused thinking when the Secretary of State had tried to elicit their views on constitutional progress. Mohamed, speaking for the Moslem Committee of Action, had explained in all seriousness that he favoured independence but only on the condition that Britain retained a garrison of troops on the island ready to intervene should independence be followed by inter-communal violence or even by discrimination against the Moslems. The Tamil United Party and the Sino-Mauritian Union had at least been honest about their intentions: they told Mr. Greenwood that their concern was solely to protect (and promote) the interests of their respective communities, and that, since they equated independence with Hindu domination, they opposed any change in the constitutional status quo. Terrell said that the attitude of the remaining large party, the Independent Forward Bloc, was similar. Their spokesmen made it clear that the Bloc (which was a radical party) was interested only in the improvement of social and economic conditions within Mauritius and was not much concerned about the constitutional status of the island.

/the MLP
had lost
ground. In
any future
election,

5. Terrell said that, while it was difficult to pin a label to the attitudes of the various parties, the Colonial Secretary had come away with the firm impression that only the MLP supported independence for Mauritius while all the other groups were likely, on this issue anyway, to favour in varying degrees the proposals of the PM. A further impression derived by Mr. Greenwood was that the PM had greatly increased its electoral strength during the past twelve months and that, conversely, it could be expected that the MLP and the PM would emerge much more evenly balanced in the legislature. (There had, of course, been no opportunity to test this, but it was a conclusion which most observers would accept.) In addition, whereas the MLP was becoming more and more the party of the Hindu, the PM was gaining adherents from all communities and thus could most validly claim to be a national, as distinct from a communal, party. Terrell said that he mentioned this because it helped to explain present Colonial Office thinking about what to aim for in the projected constitutional talks.

6. In particular it was now fairly well agreed that the MLP would need to be steered away from any ideas about immediate independence. The MLP was not so much the party of the majority as of the majority community. To equate the two, and to abandon the island to Hindu hegemony, would be to risk precipitating inter-communal clashes of the scale of Cyprus or British Guiana. On the other hand, the PM's idea of integration also seemed a non-starter. Integration would be unpopular with the Hindus, apart from which distance, racial and language differences would create immense administrative difficulties. Moreover, it might not be acceptable to the British Parliament (who presumably had no wish to subsidise Mauritius financially to the extent that integration would entail) and it would undoubtedly draw down on the British Government charges of imperialism from the Afro-Asians in the U.N. Colonial Office thinking at present

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was therefore directed towards finding formulae which, while meeting the views of the MLP and PM respectively, would be both acceptable to the British Government and sufficiently watered down to make each party's proposals palatable to the other. The idea would be to obtain agreement at the constitutional conference to the pulling of the opposing propositions to the Mauritian electorate for final decision. Terrell remarked that the cliché about all this being easier said than done was never more applicable. The Governor was currently preparing the draft of a despatch setting out possible alternative formulae (limited association or a form of circumscribed independence) which the Secretary of State might subsequently send to Mauritius.

7. Terrell commented that in thus equating the PM with the MLP, the Colonial Secretary had been influenced by Gaeton Duval's threat that a settlement not acceptable to the PM would be forcefully changed after independence - a threat which derived credence from the fact of the predominance of Creoles in the island's security forces. There was also the fact that Duval was increasingly coming to be seen as the heir apparent to the premiership. He and Ramgoolan were good friends, and Duval was able to gain a certain respectability among the Hindus from this association. At the same time there was always the possibility that he would win over the 65-year old Ramgoolan to the view that, in the interests of communal harmony, some compromise on independence was necessary, in which case the left of the MLP might repudiate Ramgoolan's leadership, leaving it open for Duval to draw the MLP right and centre under his wing.

8. In reply to our query, Terrell said that Jules Koenig, the PM secretary-general, had virtually abdicated leadership of the party to Duval. Duval in fact ranked head and shoulders above any other member of the party. Only he was able to harangue and influence crowds of people, and indeed the great strides made by the PM in the last year owed everything to the dynamism of this one man. The corollary to this, of course, was that if anything happened to Duval the PM would probably descend into desuetude.

9. In reply to a further question, Terrell described the disturbances which broke out in one or two places in Mauritius on May Day as being the result of clashes between the hooligan fringes of the PM and the MLP. They reflected, however, the communal tensions over the approach of the constitutional conference, and as such there could easily be further trouble. If trouble were to erupt over a wide area, it was possible that the local police forces would be unable to cope without external reinforcement.

10. A copy of this memorandum has been forwarded to Dar-Es-Salaam.

(Lance Joseph)
for Senior External Affairs Representative

CONFIDENTIAL

OUTWARD SAVINGRAM

181515 *8-6756*
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W

17th May, 1965

To External Canberra
From External
Australian High Commission
London

Savingram No. 113.73
Repeated to Austcom Dar-es-Salaam ✓

Mauritius

Your telegram 2358 and our 3916. Reviewing background today to recent disturbances, Terrell (Colonial Office) referred us to "Times" editorial of 13th May. Disturbances and loss of life in Mauritius provided another indication that, when a territory shared among several ethnic groups saw independence round the corner, racial fears soon came to dominate politics. In Mauritius, as in British Guiana and Fiji, those fears were directed against an Indian majority. Significantly, tension in Mauritius had been building up since visit to island last month by Colonial Secretary, when arrangements for further constitutional conference were discussed.

2. Incidents had so far involved only the hooligan elements of the rival political factions. The leadership of the various parties had dissociated themselves from the violence and had joined with Governor in appealing for calm. Decision to request despatch of British troops had had support of all sections of coalition Government and troops' subsequent arrival had been widely welcomed on the island. Similarly for the decision to declare state of emergency: this had been done with full knowledge and agreement of Council of Ministers. Some fifty arrests had already been made under emergency regulations, while searches of persons carried out had revealed iron bars and, in one case, two sticks of dynamite.

3. Terrell emphasized it would be wrong to interpret recent developments as indicating that critical situation was fast developing in Mauritius. Incidents which had occurred appeared to be spontaneous outbreaks of racial tension not reflecting planned disorder. Troops despatched to Mauritius were not intended to have operational role. The sending of them had been more of a precautionary measure, designed to forestall further trouble by demonstrating readiness of UK to fly in troops at short notice if required.

DIS
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High Commissioner
A/Deputy High Commissioner
A/Official Secretary
External Affairs

High Commissioner
6-5-65

Mr Wilson
6-5-65

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(NB NOT been by
in Bismarck)
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245/34

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY,
PARIS.

Memo No. 454
File No. 225/33

31st May, 1965

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Mauritius

.... We attach an article by Jean Knecht from
Le Monde of 30th May on recent developments in Mauritius.

2. A copy of this memorandum has been sent to
Dar-es-Salaam.

G. C. Lewis
(G. C. Lewis)
First Secretary

RECEIVED
(G. C. Lewis)

15/6

Juli

*High Commissioner
to see*

OUTWARD CABLEGRAM

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OUTWARD CABLE

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CONFIDENTIAL

14.5103
13th May, 1965

To External Canberra

Repeated to Austcom Dar-Es-Salaam (as savingram),

No. 3663

From External

Mauritius

Our memo 727. Following further clashes May 10th between supporters of Labour Party and Parti Mauricien (in which two people were killed), British have ordered one company of troops to proceed from Aden to Mauritius, where they will be available to assist local police forces. On request of Governor, Mauritian party leaders have broadcast appeal for calm.

2. Despatch of troops is being billed as "routine movements". Colonial Office in fact is quite concerned about degree of political unrest which has been rising in Mauritius since Mr. Greenwood's visit last month.

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A/Deputy High Commissioner
A/Official Secretary
External Affairs

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OUTWARD SAVINGRAM **CONFIDENTIAL**

LJ

1st March, 1965

To External Canberra

From External
Australian High Commission
London

Savingram No. Ex33.

repeated Austcom Dar-18-3aludm

MAURITIUS

Your 876. Following sketch summary of Mauritius political situation was provided last week by Fairclough, Head of Colonial Office Indian Ocean Department.

2. The main political problem in Mauritius was communalism. The complex voting arrangements in force were designed solely to maintain position whereby each racial group secured its "fair" representation in Legislature and Executive. By and large system devised had worked quite well. Though inter-racial suspicion undoubtedly existed, communities had managed to get along with one another in matters of administration and government. Partly this was reflection of sophistication of the people.

3. Under timetable agreed upon last year further constitutional talks were scheduled for sometime after October, 1965. Debate was now on in Mauritius about whether this date should be brought forward (as Labour Party desired) or put back (as Partie Mauricienne would prefer). Much consideration was also being given to question of what should be included on conference agenda. It seemed quite certain that agreement would be reached to enable Mauritius to go forward into full internal self-government. The real question was to what extent issue of independence would figure in discussions. Ramgoolam and Walter had come out (in public anyway) strongly in favour of independence. Partie Mauricienne, after first toying with idea of integration with Britain, were now talking about some form of continuing "association" with U.K.

4. It was probably as a tactical move to counter these P.M. proposals that, on 9th February, on his return from India, Ramgoolam had thrown out idea of placing Mauritius under U.N. supervision as alternative to independence should latter be precluded because of communal difficulties. In Colonial Office view this had been mere kite-flying on Ramgoolam's part. Ramgoolam had also spoken at times about Mauritius joining an East African Federation. It seemed probable, however, that he had never really thought this one out. Mauritians were much too sophisticated for East Africans; the Mauritian Creole generally despised the East

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
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African negro as an uncivilised monkey recently down from the trees. Ramgoolan was very friendly with Kenyatta and there was evidence that, whenever he visited Kenya, he became infected by warmth of his welcome (and by chiding he usually received for not pushing vigorously enough for independence). This would explain his habit of shooting off about East African Federation whenever he visited Nairobi.

5. Much of Ramgoolan's urge for independence was based on personal considerations. He had admitted to British that he felt acutely his inferior status when (as he was wont to do) hsb-knobbing with the Kenyattas and Nasseere of this world.

6. Mr. Greenwood was to visit Mauritius in April. It was expected that, as result of visit, constitutional talks would be brought forward to September this year.

 Distribution: High Commissioner
Deputy High Commissioner
Official Secretary
External Affairs

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245/34

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
INWARD CABLEGRAM

CM

I.07953

FROM:

DATED: 26TH FEBRUARY, 1965.
1935

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION,
LONDON.

REC'D: 27TH FEBRUARY, 1965.
0701

1531 CONFIDENTIAL.

REPEATED SAVINGRAM DAR ES SALAAM.

FROM EXTERNAL.

THE SEYCHELLES.

YOUR 876.

FOLLOWING REVIEW OF SEYCHELLES AFFAIRS WAS PROVIDED TODAY BY FAIRCLOUGH, HEAD OF COLONIAL OFFICE, INDIAN OCEAN DEPARTMENT.

2. UNTIL RECENTLY THERE WAS NO POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN ACCEPTED SENSE IN SEYCHELLES.

THIS WAS SYMPTOMATIC OF SMALL SIZE OF POPULATION (45,000) AND GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF INDOLENCE AND LETHARGY.

3. ABSENCE OF POLITICAL FERVOUR HAD NEVERTHELESS BEEN PUZZLING GIVEN STRUCTURE OF SEYCHELLES SOCIETY - A FEW RICH PLANTERS AND THEIR PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS COLLEAGUES, ON ONE HAND, AND THE MASS OF POPULATION EARNING EXTREMELY SMALL INCOMES, ON THE OTHER.

AVERAGE WAGE OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURER IN SEYCHELLES WAS LESS THAN FOUR POUND PER WEEK.

AS AGAINST THIS, WORKING HOURS WERE SHORT, WORK WAS NEVER INTENSIVE, AND NOBODY STARVED.

THIS IN FACT WAS ONE OF THE TROUBLES.

COCONUTS CONTINUED TO GROW IN SPITE OF LACKADAISICAL ATTITUDE OF PLANTERS AND THEIR WORKERS, AND FISH INSISTED IN COMMITTING SUICIDE IN THE NOT-VERY-EFFECTIVE FISH TRAPS.

RESULT WAS THAT NO-ONE SEEMED TO HAVE WILL OR INITIATIVE TO TRY TO IMPART DYNAMISM TO ECONOMY.

POLITICAL MANIFESTATION OF THIS HAD BEEN TENDENCY FOR POLITICS TO BE REGARDED AS PRESERVE OF RICH SO THAT, IN SPITE OF VIRTUAL UNIVERSAL ADULT SUFFRAGE, ONLY UPPERCRUST OF SOCIETY HAD EVER BOTHERED TO PRESENT THEMSELVES AS CANDIDATES FOR ELECTIONS.

4. THIS THEN WAS SITUATION WHICH HAD PREVAILED UP TO YEAR AGO. SUBSEQUENTLY, HOWEVER, THERE HAD BEEN EVIDENCE OF STIRRINGS OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG LOWER ECHELONS OF SEYCHELLOIS SOCIETY.

IN PARTICULAR, PAST TWELVE MONTHS HAD SEEN DEVELOPMENT OF TWO GENUINE POLITICAL PARTIES.

ONE OF THESE, THE SEYCHELLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY, WAS LED BY A SEYCHELLOIS JIMMY MANCHAN.

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
INWARD CABLEGRAM

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I.07953

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MANCHAN WAS SON OF WEALTHY SEYCHELLOIS FAMILY.
IN MUDDLED SORT OF WAY HE HAD MANAGED AT TURN OF 1963 TO
PROJECT HIMSELF AS PROGRESSIVE THINKER.

HE HAD ACCORDINGLY FIRST BEEN OPPOSED BY THE "GRAND
BLANC" (LOCAL DESIGNATION FOR THE PLANTER, LAWYER,
TRADER COMMUNITY) AS A TRAITOR TO HIS OWN KIND.

MORE RECENTLY, HOWEVER, PLANTOCRACY AND THE OTHERS HAD COME
ROUND TO MANCHAN.

THIS WAS PARTLY BECAUSE OF ESSENTIAL MODERATION OF MANCHAN'S
POLICIES, BUT LARGELY IT WAS REACTION TO GROWING INFLUENCE IN
SEYCHELLES OF THE SEYCHELLES PEOPLES' UNITED PARTY UNDER LOCAL
BARRISTER RENE.

RENE HAD BEEN DESCRIBED TO FAIRCLOUGH BY SEYCHELLES CHIEF
JUSTICE AS THE MOST INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED OF THE LAWYERS WHO
PRACTISED BEFORE HIM.

AS A RADICAL, HE HAD INEVITABLY, IN SUCH A REACTIONARY
SOCIETY, COME TO BE LABELLED A COMMUNIST.

IN FACT, HIS POLICIES - ANTI-COLONIALISTMN SEYCHELLES
FOR THE SEYCHELLOIS, EARLY INDEPENDENCE, NON-ALIGNMENT, NO
FOREIGN BASES - WERE OF STANDARD NATIONALIST PATTERN, AND THERE
WAS NO REAL EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST HE HIMSELF WAS OTHER THAN ORDINARY
NATIONALIST POLITICIAN.

5. RENE WAS READY TO ADMIT IN PRIVATE THAT HIS FOLLOWING WAS
STILL FAIRLY MODEST IN SEYCHELLES.

(HE HAS TOLD FAIRCLOUGH IT WAS "PERHAPS 1500".

BUT HE WAS KNOWN TO HAVE CLOSE LINKS WITH RULING PARTIES IN
EAST AFRICA WHERE SOME 7-8,000 SEYCHELLOIS LIVED AND WORKED.

THIS MONTH A SPUP BRANCH OFFICE WAS OPENED IN NAIROBI.

RENE HAD ALSO BEEN ABLE LAST YEAR TO MOUNT SMALL-SCALE
STRIKE AMONGST WORKERS EMPLOYED BY UNITED STATES SATELLITE
TRACKING STATION LOCATED ON MAHE.

THERE HAD BEEN SOME THROWING OF STONES AND A CAR HAD BEEN
OVERTURNED.

IN COLONIAL OFFICE VIEW, RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS SITUATION
SHOULD HAVE BEEN LAID AT DOOR OF AMERICAN OFFICE IN CHARGE OF
TRACKING ESTABLISHMENT WHOSE INEPT HANDLING OF MEN HAD PROVIDED
CONVENIENT TARGET FOR AGITATORS.

A LITTLE MORE UNDERSTANDING WOULD HAVE AVERTED ANY TROUBLE.

NEVERTHELESS, DISTURBANCE HAD SUFFICED TO CAUSE GREAT DEAL
OF FLUTTER AND DISQUIET AMONG THE "GRAND ~~BLANC~~ BLANCUN".

6. VIEW HAD BEEN PUT THAT RENE'S COLOURING - HE WAS VIRTUALLY
WHITE - WOULD IN LONG RUN PREVENT HIM FROM EVER AMOUNTING TO
MUCH POLITICALLY IN SEYCHELLES.

FOR, WHILE SEYCHELLES POPULATION WAS A MIXED BAG RANGING
THROUGH WHITES, NEAR WHITES, YELLOWS, BROWNS AND BLACKS,
WEALTH HAD TENDED TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH WHITE COMMUNITY
(HENCE DERIVATION OF "GRAND BLANC" WHILE LABOURING
CLASSES CONSISTED MOSTLY OF THOSE AT DARK END OF SPECTRUM.

COLONIAL OFFICE THOUGHT IT STILL TOO EARLY TO ASSESS WHETHER
RENE WOULD LAST.

HOWEVER, THEY CONSIDERED THAT RENE OR SOMEONE LIKE HIM
WOULD CERTAINLY REMAIN PERMANENT PHENOMENON OF SEYCHELLES
POLITICAL SCENE IF ONLY BECAUSE OF THE INEQUALITIES AND MASS
POVERTY.

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
INWARD CABLEGRAM

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I.07953

THE POOR AND UNDERPRIVILEGED MASS WAS JUST PRIMED FOR FIRING BY SOME GIFTED POLITICAL AGITATOR.

IN TERMS OF VOTING STRENGTH ALONE FIELD WAS WIDE OPEN FOR EXPLOITATION BY SOME NATIONALIST DEMAGOGUE.

TYPICAL OF THE AS YET UNTAPPED RESERVE OF VOTING POWER WAS A RECENT BY-ELECTION IN WHICH ONLY 21 PERCENT OF THOSE ESTIMATED TO BE QUALIFIED TO VOTE BOTHERED TO REGISTER, FOLLOWING WHICH ONLY 11 PERCENT ACTUALLY VOTED.

7. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND BRITISH POLICY WAS TO SEEK TO CURE THE POVERTY OF ISLANDS AND REDUCE INEQUALITIES. THERE WAS IN FACT QUITE A LOT GOING ON BY WAY OF REPRODUCTION.

THERE WAS NO CERTAINTY DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES WOULD KEEP PACE WITH POPULATION GROWTH.

AS GREAT A DIFFICULTY AS ANY WAS LACK OF DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL.

THERE WAS LITTLE FLAT GROUND WHICH WAS NOT GRANITE, AND MANY OF THE 92 ISLANDS WERE JUST PRECIPITOUS ROCK. THIS LIMITED AGRICULTURAL EXPANSION.

APART FROM IMPROVEMENTS TO COCONUT PLANTATIONS, EFFORTS WERE BEING MADE TO DEVELOP ISLANDS' TOURIST POTENTIAL.

BUT HERE PROGRESS WAS BEDEVILLED BY FACT OF REMOTENESS COMBINED WITH POOR COMMUNICATIONS WITH OUTSIDE WORLD.

LOCAL POLITICAL LEADERS HAD BEEN AGITATING FOR YEARS FOR AIRSTRIP ON MAHE.

COLONIAL OFFICE HAD SO FAR NOT MANAGED TO PERSUADE TREASURY TO PROVIDE THE MONEY.

IT MIGHT NOW BE OFFERED AS FINANCIAL "COMPENSATION" SHOULD UNITED KINGDOM, IN CONTEXT OF UNITED STATES MILITARY BASE PROPOSALS, PROCEED WITH DETACHMENT OF ALDABRA, COETIVY, AND FARQUHAR FROM SEYCHELLES CONTROL.

8. THERE HAD BEEN GOOD DEAL OF UNINFORMED TALKS ABOUT AN "ANGLO-AMERICAN BASE" AMONGST SEYCHELLOIS.

IT WAS COMMONLY BELIEVED SUCH A BASE WOULD BE LOCATED WITHIN THE SEYCHELLES THEMSELVES

IN THE POLITICAL DIALOGUE, MANCHAN AND HIS SDR. HAD COME OUT WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN FAVOUR OF A BASE, WITH RENE AND SPUR ADAMANTLY OPPOSED.

IN RECENT WEEKS THERE HAD BEEN SOMETHING OF A WHITE-WASH WITH SIGNS SUCH AS "RENE NON! BASE OUI!" (OR VICE VERSA) APPEARING AT RANDOM OVER ISLANDS.

PAIRCLOUGH COULD NOT ADD SUBSTANTIVELY TO OUR PREVIOUS REPORTS ON BASE PROPOSALS.

HE SAID INTERESTS OF COLONIAL OFFICE WERE WITH WELFARE OF LOCAL POPULATIONS AND WITH MAINTAINING WORKING RELATIONS WITH LOCAL POLITICIANS.

HE FORECAST UNITED KINGDOM WOULD HAVE QUITE A FIGHT ON ITS HANDS IF IT SOUGHT TO DETACH DIEGO GARCIA AND THE OTHER ISLANDS FROM MAURITIAN AND SEYCHELLES CONTROL.

WIDE REQUIRED TO PERSUADE LOCAL POLITICIANS TO GO ALONG WITH EXCISE OPERATION WOULD NEED TO BE CONSIDERABLE. COLONIAL OFFICE WAS WORKING ON THIS ASPECT AT PRESENT.

THEY WERE ALSO TRYING TO ESTIMATE COST OF BUYING-OUT COMMERCIAL INVESTMENTS (MAINLY COCONUT PLANTATIONS) AS WELL AS COSTS OF RESETTLEMENT AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES FOR LOCAL POPULATIONS FORCED TO MOVE.

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
INWARD CABLEGRAM

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I.07953

9. FAIRCLOUGH SAID HIS DEPARTMENT BELIEVED INDEPENDENCE FOR SEYCHELLES WOULD BE LUDICROUS.

BUT THIS USED TO BE SAID ABOUT ZANZIBAR, MALTA, AND GAMBIA.

AS TERRITORY AFTER TERRITORY OBTAINED ITS INDEPENDENCE, BRITAIN WAS FINDING THAT PROCESS OF DECOLONISATION HAD ITS OWN MOMENTUM WHICH MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO OPT OUT AS FINAL BEND HURTTED INTO SIGHT.

IN THIS CONTEXT, ALL THAT COULD BE SAID AT PRESENT WAS THAT UNITED KINGDOM WAS NOT CONTEMPLATING ANY IMMINENT CHANGES IN SEYCHELLES CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS.

THIS HAD BEEN BURDEN OF DESPATCH ADDRESSED BY COLONIAL SECRETARY TO SEYCHELLES LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN MIDDLE OF LAST YEAR.

BUT, WHILE THUS PROVIDING REASSURANCE TO COUNCILLORS THAT IT WAS NOT BRITISH INTENTION TO CAST SEYCHELLES ADRIFT WILLY-NILLY, DESPATCH HAD ALSO LEFT DOOR OPEN FOR FURTHER CONSTITUTIONAL ADVANCE SHOULD THIS IN FUTURE BE DESIRED.

THIS ASPECT OF DESPATCH HAD BEEN EMPHASIZED BY BRITISH OFFICIALS IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH RENE.

IT WAS ASSESSED THAT, WITH A HARD CORE OF SEVERAL HUNDRED OF HIS SUPPORTERS IN VICTORIA, RENE MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO STAGE DEMONSTRATIONS AND SO FORTH WERE HE TO BELIEVE FURTHER PROGRESS BY CONSTITUTIONAL ACTION WAS BLOCKED.

RENE, OF COURSE, WAS PRESSING FOR EARLY INDEPENDENCE FOR SEYCHELLES.

10. FOR REVIEW OF POLITICAL SITUATION PRIOR TO 1964 SEE OUR 1964 MEMORANDUM 600.

THE OLD TAPA GROUP HAVE NOW MERGED WITH SDP.

THE SIUP ORGANIZATION HAS SIMILARLY BEEN TAKEN OVER BY SPUP.

MIN. & DEPT E.A.(155/21/1)

A/MIN. & DEPT DEFENCE

P.M's

27TH FEBRUARY, 1965.

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COLOMBO KARACHI KUALA LUMPUR NEW DELHI SINGAPORE WASHINGTON
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245/34
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA, LONDON

OUTWARD CABLEGRAM

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OUTWARD CABLE

CONFIDENTIAL

26th February, 1965.

To External Canberra

repeated savingram Austcom Dar-es-Salaam

No. 1531

From External

THE SEYCHELLES

Your 876. Following review of Seychelles affairs was provided today by Fairclough, Head of Colonial Office Indian Ocean Department.

2. Until recently there was no political consciousness in accepted sense in Seychelles. This was symptomatic of small size of population (45,000) and general atmosphere of indolence and lethargy.

3. Absence of political fervour had nevertheless been puzzling given structure of Seychelles society - a few rich planters²⁴⁵ and their professional and business colleagues, on one hand, and the mass of population earning extremely small incomes, on the other. Average wage of agricultural labourer in Seychelles was less than £4 per week. As against this, working hours were short, work was never intensive, and nobody starved. This in fact was one of troubles. Coconuts continued to grow in spite of lackadaisical attitude of planters and their workers, and fish insisted in committing suicide in the not-very-effective fish traps. Result was that ^{no} one seemed to have will or initiative to try to impart dynamism to economy. Political manifestation of this had been tendency for politics to be regarded as preserve of rich so that, in spite of virtual universal adult suffrage, only uppermost^{CRUST} of society had ever bothered to present themselves as candidates for elections.

4. This then was situation which had prevailed up to year ago. Subsequently, however, there had been evidence of stirrings of political consciousness among lower echelons of Seychellois society. In particular, past twelve months had seen development of two genuine political parties. One of these, the Seychelles Democratic Party, was led by a Chinese Seychellois Jimmy Mancham. Mancham was son of wealthy Seychellois family. In muddled sort of way he had managed at turn of 1963 to project himself as progressive thinker. He had accordingly first been opposed by the "grand blanc" (local designation for the planter, lawyer, trader community) as a traitor to his own kind. More recently, however, plantocracy and

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NAA: A9736, 245/34-1

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and the others had come round to Mancham. This was partly because of essential moderation of Mancham's policies, but largely it was reaction to growing influence in Seychelles of the Seychelles Peoples' United Party under local barrister Rene. Rene had been described to Fairclough by Seychelles Chief Justice as the most intellectually gifted of the lawyers who practised before him. As a radical, he had inevitably in such a reactionary society come to be labelled a Communist. In fact, his policies - anti-colonialism, Seychelles for the Seychellois, early independence, non-alignment, no foreign bases - were of standard nationalist pattern, and there was no real evidence to suggest he himself was other than ordinary nationalist politician.

5. Rene was ready to admit in private that his following was still fairly modest in Seychelles. (He has told Fairclough it was "perhaps 1500"). But he was known to have close links with ruling parties in East Africa where some 7-8,000 Seychellois lived and worked. This month a SPUP branch office was opened in Nairobi. Rene had also been able last year to mount small-scale strike amongst workers employed by US satellite tracking station located on Mahe. There had been some throwing of stones and a car had been overturned. In Colonial Office view, responsibility for this situation should have been laid at door of American officer in charge of tracking establishment whose inept handling of men had provided convenient target for agitators. A little more understanding would have averted any trouble. Nevertheless disturbance had sufficed to cause great deal of flutter and disquiet among the "grand blanc".

6. View had been put that Rene's colouring - he was virtually white - would in long run prevent him from ever amounting to much politically in Seychelles. For, while Seychelles population was a mixed bag ranging through whites, near whites, yellows, browns and blacks, wealth had tended to be identified with white community (hence derivation of "grand blanc") while labouring classes consisted mostly of those at dark end of spectrum. Colonial Office thought it still too early to assess whether Rene would last. However, they considered that Rene or someone like him would certainly remain permanent phenomenon of Seychelles political scene if only because of the inequalities and mass poverty. The poor and underprivileged mass was just primed for firing by some gifted political agitator. In terms of voting strength alone field was wide open for exploitation by some nationalist demagogue. Typical of the as yet untapped reserve of voting power was a recent by-election in which only 21% of those estimated to be qualified to vote bothered to register, following which only 11% actually voted.

7. Against this background British policy was to seek to cure the poverty of islands and reduce inequalities. There was in fact quite a lot going on by way of development expenditure. But - and this was the rub - there was also quite a lot going on by way of reproduction. There was no certainty development and employment opportunities would keep pace with population growth. As great a difficulty as any was lack of development potential. There was little flat ground &

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which was not granite, and many of the 92 islands were just precipitous rock. This limited agricultural expansion. Apart from improvements to coconut plantations, efforts were being made to develop islands' tourist potential. But here progress was bedevilled by fact of remoteness combined with poor communications with outside world. Local political leaders had been agitating for years for airstrip on Mahe. Colonial Office had so far not managed to persuade Treasury to provide the money. It might now be offered as financial "compensation" should UK, in context of US military base proposals, proceed with detachment of Aldabra, Coetivy, and Farquhar from Seychellois control.

8. There had been good deal of uninformed talk about an "Anglo-American base" amongst Seychellois. It was commonly believed such a base would be located within the Seychelles themselves. In the political dialogue, Mancham and his SDP had come out wholeheartedly in favour of a base, with Rene and SFUP adamantly opposed. In recent weeks there had been something of a white-wash war with signs such as "Rene Won! Base Out!" (or vice versa) appearing at random over islands. Fairclough could not add substantively to our previous reports on base proposals. He said interests of Colonial Office were with welfare of local populations and with maintaining working relations with local politicians. He forecast UK would have quite a fight on its hands if it sought to detach Diego Garcia and the other islands from Mauritian and Seychelles control. Bribe required to persuade local politicians to go along with excise operation would need to be considerable. Colonial Office was working on this aspect at present. They were also trying to estimate cost of buying-out commercial investments (mainly coconut plantations) as well as costs of resettlement and rehabilitation programmes for local populations forced to move.

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9. Fairclough said his department believed independence for Seychelles would be ludicrous. But this used to be said about Zanzibar, Malta, and Gambia. As territory after territory obtained its independence, Britain was finding that process of decolonisation had its own momentum which made it impossible to opt out as final band hurtled into sight. In this context, all that could be said at present was that UK was not contemplating any imminent changes in Seychelles constitutional status. This had been burden of despatch addressed by Colonial Secretary to Seychelles Legislative Council in middle of last year. But, while thus providing reassurance to Councillors that it was not British intention to cast Seychelles adrift willy-nilly, despatch had also left door^{open} for further constitutional advance should this in future be desired. This aspect of despatch had been emphasized by British officials in their dealings with Rene. It was assessed that, with a hard core of several hundred of his supporters in Victoria, Rene might be tempted to stage demonstrations and so forth were he to believe further progress by constitutional action was blocked. Rene, of course, was pressing for early independence for Seychelles.

10. For review of political ~~Situation~~ situation prior to 1964 see our 1964 memorandum 600. The old TAPA group have now merged with SDE.74cSIUP organization has similarly been taken over by SFUP.

RD
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Deputy High Commissioner
Official Secretary
External Affairs

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NEW DELHI.

10th February, 1965

With the Compliments
of the
Australian High Commission.

Australian High Commission,
DAR-ES-SALAAM

Memorandum No. }

High Commissioner



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AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION
NEW DELHI.

In reply quote No. 221/6/3
Memorandum No. 296

10th February, 1965

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA A.C.T.

MAURITIUS

I asked Mr Rajeshwar Dayal (Special Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs) about the recent visit here of the Prime Minister of Mauritius. Dayal said that the visit had gone very well. Mauritius expected to gain its independence within the next two years, and this was supported by India, but it was not a contentious matter so it had not featured very much in discussions. Mauritius was worried about over-population, and looking to some way of getting more industry. Efforts would be made to attract enterprise in Mauritius by Indian millowners. The Mauritius Government was also pressing India to establish a direct airline between Bombay and Mauritius. The Prime Minister's party had given the impression that Mauritius was looking towards East Africa but not exclusively so.

2. I asked whether the Indian Government had given any thought to the future of Mauritius and the way in which this could be influenced in a good direction. Dayal said that India did not have any ideas on this. I said that for a long time I had been worried lest, after independence, something might take place similar to the coup in Zanzibar. In a small country a very small group, almost a platoon of police or army, could seize power. This offered an opportunity to, for example, China. Dayal said that the Prime Minister of Mauritius had in fact this danger in mind. Dayal said that a lot of Mauritian students were studying in India. I said that I had seen and talked with a number of them during my travels in India, but they were all of Indian origin and it seemed to me that this was a weakness in India's relations with Mauritius. India was not having enough contacts in this way with other communities of Mauritius. Dayal said that unfortunately the students from the other communities preferred to go elsewhere.

4. I said I thought that Australia and India should give some thought to whether we could work together, jointly or on parallel lines, to keep the development of Mauritius along sound lines. Dayal agreed and said he would bear it in mind.

5. Copies of this memorandum are being sent to the Australian posts in London, Washington, and Dar-es-Salaam.

J. Flimsell
(J. Flimsell)
High Commissioner

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24th December, 1964.


The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

MAURITIUS

The Prime Minister of Mauritius, Dr S. Ramgoolam, passed through Dar es Salaam on 21st December. He was met at the airport by the Minister for Lands, Settlement and Water Development, L.N. Sijaona. According to "The Nationalist", Dr Ramgoolam told reporters: "It has been the wish of my party and Government to join an East African Federation ever since 1961. We want to co-operate with our neighbours."

2. On his talks with British Colonial Secretary Greenwood, Ramgoolam is reported to have said he went to London to ask Britain to advance the independence of Mauritius. "Mr Greenwood had no objection to this, provided the other parties in my country agree to the idea. I am therefore going to inform them of this and try to fix a new date."

3. According to the "Standard, Tanzania", in a report under a London date line which you have probably already seen, Dr Ramgoolam said on leaving London that "if any proposals (for an Anglo-American base in Mauritius) are made we will have to investigate them if they appear satisfactory, I do not think there will be a great deal of opposition to the scheme".


(F.W. Truelove)
Acting High Commissioner

PIERRE LOTI
Loads for Djibouti, Port Said
KOUANG-SI
Loads for Djibouti, Marseille
Antwerp and Dunkirk
JEAN LABORDE
Loads for Djibouti, Port Said
For freight bookings
AGENCE MARITIM

MAURITIUS: UHURU TALKS

London, Monday.

THE Prime Minister of the sugar-growing colony of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, Dr. S. Ramgoolam, said here that early independence talks with Britain looked "virtually certain."

He disclosed at London airport before flying home:

"I have had talks with the Commonwealth Relations secretary, Mr. Arthur Bottomley, who said that if all parties in Mauritius wanted an early independence he would have no objection."

Cyclone insurance

"Of course, I have to convince my colleagues into an early independence but I don't think they will take much convincing."

Before the British captured Mauritius in 1810 during the Napoleonic Wars, the island had been controlled successively by Portugal, Holland and France.

French influence has been maintained under British rule, several of the island's newspapers being bi-lingual French-English.

The population of this multi-racial community is 832,000.

During his stay in London,

Dr. Ramgoolam was also guest of honour at a government lunch given by Colonial Secretary, Mr. Anthony Greenwood.

Officials at that time said the purpose of his visit to Britain was to discuss with the Colonial Office and insurance interests, the cyclone and drought insurance for the community's sugar cane plantations.

At London Airport Dr. Ramgoolam was asked about the possibility of an Anglo-American base in Mauritius.

He said: "If any proposals are made we will have to investigate them, if they appear satisfactory. I do not think there will be a great deal of opposition to the scheme."

ANGOLA FIGHTING

Lisbon — Portuguese Government forces in Angola inflicted 'numerous losses on terrorists' between December 9 to 16, an official communique states.

Mauritius Premier in Dar stop

STANDARD 22/12/64

THE Prime Minister of Mauritius, Dr. S. Ramgoolan, who has been in the United Kingdom to negotiate advancement of his country's date for Independence, passed through Dar es Salaam yesterday on his way to Port Louis.

He landed at about 12.50 p.m. and was met at the airport by the Minister for Lands, Settlement and Water Development, Mr. L. Nangwanda Sijaona, and the Chief of Protocol, Mr. J. W. Mbwambo.

Dr. Ramgoolan, whose country's independence is scheduled for October, 1965, visited Tanganyika during the Independence celebrations in 1961 in his capacity as Chief Minister of Mauritius.

With him was the President of the Mauritius Labour Congress, Mr. H. Ramnarain, who has been in England on a labour relations course.

Mr. Ramnarain, a gardener by profession, is also president of the Plantation Workers' Union in Mauritius.

(See Page 6)



The Prime Minister of Mauritius, Dr. S. Ramgoolan (right) pictured at Dar es Salaam Airport yesterday with the Minister for Lands, Settlement and Water Development, Mr. L. N. Sijaona (left), and the Chief Protocol Officer, Mr. W. J. Mbwambo.

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Acting Chief Secretary of the Mauritius Government (Mr Roman Rostowski)
14th December, 1965.
Australian High Commissioner in Tanzania (Gilchrist)

(1) EAST AFRICANS AND MAURITIUS; (2) MBOYA ON ABORIGINES

(Rostowski, whom I had found a helpful and perceptive British expatriate officer when he was Assistant Secretary (External Affairs) in Kenya's pre-Independence Administration in 1963, came out to Mauritius airport to greet me in transit from Nairobi to Australia.)

Comparing the Mauritians among whom he was now working with the Kenyans with whom he had worked earlier, Rostowski said that the ordinary people of Mauritius were far more sophisticated than the peoples of East Africa; they also had "a quality of kindness" which the East Africans did not possess. Another difference from East Africa was the existence of opposition parties with whom the Mauritian Government was on good terms.

2. With reference to Tom Mboya's visit to Australia, Rostowski said that Mboya had been reported in Mauritius as having said that the Australian Aborigines should have a separate State of their own (Rostowski could not identify the source of this report. I said that it was news to me).

Nairobi (Trade)

Canberra

HK
(H. Gilchrist)
High Commissioner

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VISIT TO MAURITIUS, 29th September - 5th October.

Although only two days were set aside for this visit, I spent the greater part of my stay in Mauritius, from 30th September - 5th October, engaged on official business, due to the slowness with which official calls could be arranged.

2. During my stay I called on Messrs. Allen, Acting Chief Secretary, Nairac, Acting Deputy Chief Secretary, McCaffrie, Commissioner of Police, Ringadoom, Minister for Education, Duval, Minister for Housing, Lands, and Town and Country Planning, Abdul Razak Muhamed, Minister for Social Security, and Paturau, Minister for Industry and External Communications. I also called on Mr. Beejadhur, former Minister for Education and at present Director of the main Labour daily newspaper, "Advance", the French Consul, Mr. Bermondy, the Commissioner for India, Mr. Mani, and the General Manager of the Commercial Bank of Mauritius, Mr. Lamusse. I also met M. Fakira, Mayor of Pt. Louis, the Commander of the shore station HMS Mauritius, Commander Lavender, a leading Mauritian lawyer, Andre Robert, as well as the Director of Civil Aviation. With all of these people I was able to have some useful discussions.

3. The Governor, Sir John Shaw Rennie, was absent from the colony on leave and the Chief Secretary, Mr. T. Vickers, was Acting Governor. A social invitation to meet him was unfortunately received too late in my stay for me to be able to accept.

Racial Groups.

4. Mauritius is an island, 35 miles wide by 50 miles long, with a population of just over 713,000. This is split up among approximately 467,000 Indians (360,000 Hindus, and 115,000 Muslims), 23,000 Chinese and the "general population" which number about 215,000. These figures are only approximate and are based on the 1962 census which showed the Indian population to total just over 450,000.

5. In describing the various racial groups in Mauritius, one strikes the inevitable problem of definition. The Hindu, Muslim, and Chinese groups are fairly clearly defined, although intermarriage between various racial elements on a small island inevitably leads to certain indefinite elements being included in a particular racial group. The main problem arises in respect to the group referred to officially as the "general population". This group includes the Franco-Mauritians, the Creoles, as well as the expatriate European residents, mainly British and French.

6. The term "Creole" is not used in its strict French sense of meaning anyone born in a French colonial possession, but is applied to anyone of mixed racial descent. There are about 200,000 Creoles in Mauritius. They are sometimes referred

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to as "coloureds", sometimes as "near whites", depending on the standpoint of the speaker.

7. There are 12 - 15,000 Mauritians of predominantly French descent, referred to as Franco-Mauritians. This group considers itself as "white", although in fact, certain elements in it could probably be classified more properly as Creoles. Members of this group maintain strong social and cultural links with France, and French is their first language. They have, however, severed their connection with France, are not entitled to French passports, and consider themselves British subjects. According to the French Consul, there are 2,000 Mauritians who have dual French and British citizenship and only 150 French nationals.

Political Parties.

8. The political views of the dominant Indian community are expressed through the Partie Travailleuse (Labour Party), and the Comite d'Action Musselman (Muslim Party). A political alliance exists between the Labour and Muslim Parties. The Tamoul Party and the Independent Forward Bloc are two other notable parties which give political expression to sectional views of the Indian community. Various associations like the Hindu Congress, are primarily cultural bodies without any political wing but having considerable political influence.

9. The main minority party representing the overwhelming majority of the Creole population is The Partie Mauricien Socialiste Democrat. The party is strongly supported by the Franco-Mauritians.

10. The number of minor political parties is changing constantly but none of them is particularly significant at the present time. The Communist Party is very weak and it appears that the Communists are concentrating on penetrating the Labour Party. The Mauritius Young Communist League is strong and active.

11. Under the present Constitution which became operative in February this year there is, under the Governor, a Legislative Assembly which consists of 40 members elected on the basis of universal suffrage, plus a possible maximum number of 15 nominated members. The Premier, chosen by the Governor from the Assembly, heads a Council of Ministers nominated by the Governor in consultation with the Premier. Under the present colonial constitution the Governor retains wide executive powers.

12. In the Legislative Assembly, from the combined elected and nominated members, the Labour Party (P.T.) has 24-25 votes, the Partie Mauricien (PM) 10, the Independent Forward Bloc (I.F.B.) 6, and the Muslim Party (C.A.M.) 5. Of the 3 Independents, 2 usually vote P.M. With the existing P.T. - C.A.M. alliance the Indian community has a comfortable majority in the Assembly.

13. There are 14 Ministers in the Council of Ministers. 6 P.T., 2 C.A.M., 3 P.M., 2 I.F.B., and 1 Independent, giving the P.T. - C.A.M. alliance a majority of votes. The Chief Secretary sits in the Council of Ministers as an ex officio member.

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14. The present Government is a Coalition of all the main parties but appears to exist on paper more than in practice. The Premier and Labour Party Leader, Dr. Ramgoolam, was absent in London at the time of my visit. Although the names of Labour Ministers, Messrs. Ringadoo, Walter, and Forget crop up frequently in the discussion of the affairs of the Labour Party, there is no recognised successor to Ramgoolam. As far as I could ascertain no decisions of any substance are taken in the Premier's absence from the island.

15. I was unable to sort out the complexities of the forces at work within the Party. It is predominantly Hindu and the four main castes of Hindu society are strongly reflected in it and its policies are still influenced by questions of caste, the two strongest castes being the two lower castes of Hindu society. The former Minister for Education, Beejadhur, who lost his seat in the last General Election told me that his defeat had origins in the fact that he was a member of the minority Brahmin caste and he had been opposed by strong supporters of the lower castes. The generally believed story in Government circles is that Beejadhur refused to give a Government scholarship to the son of one of his former supporters.

16. The Labour Party opposes strongly the idea of communal electorates and supports early independence for Mauritius. It tends to favour the establishment of loose economic (but not political) ties with East Africa, and to foster general Indian interests in Mauritius. (The Education Minister, Ringadoo, is introducing Indian language teachers into Mauritian schools.) The party advocates publicly broad Socialist policies but, since many of its major supporters are extremely rich capitalists, some of these policies are suspect. In both election campaigns there was evidence of racial prejudice against whites and near-whites. In some party election speeches references were made to the need to avoid further "white" representation in political bodies. In one incident, the Leader of the Allied Muslim Party, Abdul Razak Muhamed, spoke angrily to the Senior Police Officer of Pt. Louise Police Division, (a Creole), and told him that after Independence there would be no more white and near-white members of the Police Force.

17. There is no clearly defined extreme left-wing group in the Labour Party but a few of the Party's Creole supporters seem potentially dangerous. Of these, the Minister of Works and Internal Communications, Walter, is generally distrusted by officials. A former military officer who led the army mutiny, he is known to hold strong anti-white views.

18. There has been some Communist penetration within the party but this does not appear to be confined to any particular group. Both the Minister of Education and the Director of the main party newspaper denied there was a Communist threat to Mauritius.

PARTIE MAURICIEN. (P.M.)

19. At the time of my visit, Mr. Koenig, the Secretary-General of the Party was at home with heart trouble. I saw

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a considerable amount of his deputy, Mr. Gaeton Duval, Minister for Housing, Lands, and Town and Country Planning, whom I had met in Dar es Salaam a few weeks earlier, just after his return from a visit to Zanzibar, where he had been a guest of Sheikh Babu. He was very hospitable to both my wife and myself, and we spent a day with him, between a general by-election, which the P.M. lost, and a municipal election, which the P.M. won. The day before our meeting Duval had received anonymous death threats should he take part in the municipal election campaign. Although asked by the Police if he desired Police protection, he had refused it.

20. Duval is a handsome young man, in his early thirties and is a man of considerable ability. Of peasant stock, he managed to obtain secondary education in France and a Law Degree from London University. He speaks often and fondly of his associations with France. He is a most dynamic architect and proponent of P.M. policies. He has the reputation of being able to whip up a crowd of supporters within five minutes and is something of a demigod amongst the Creole population. He is popularly known as "the King of the Creoles". He claims to have the support of a third of the population of Mauritius. Duval has a well-substantiated record for thuggery, but it is felt by colonial Government officials that, although he is still headstrong and arrogant, he is developing a sense of responsibility. Most people spoke highly of his intelligence and of his courageous leadership. The Acting Civil Secretary, Allen, considers that if Ramgoolam were to retire or die within the next few years (he is about 64 and his health is not too good), there will be a fight for political leadership in Mauritius between Walter (P.T.), Abdul Razak Muhamed (C.A.M.) and Duval.

21. Duval told me that there was no doubt in his mind as to his alignments in the world. He was pro-Western, and anti-Communist. The P.M. did not favour Independence but were prepared to accept it if the wellbeing of their community could be satisfactorily secured. Duval said he wanted the British to stay and guarantee the integrity of the Courts and the Police Force. If these institutions could be preserved then the Indians could have their independence so long as he was able to apply to the Privy Council and to work within the framework of a democratic constitution. He would be prepared to see the Indians nationalise the land and do whatever they wished. In time he felt that the electorate would grow disillusioned with a Labour Party policy and swing in favour of the Opposition. If the British left Mauritius he was certain that the Indian practice of buying justice would be speeded up and the impartiality of the Police destroyed. If the British did go, his one hope was that they would leave the island completely and not return after Independence to maintain an Indian Government in power. Duval's views on the establishment of an Anglo-American Base in Mauritius are reported in a following section.

22. Duval appeared genuinely worried about the future prospect of racial conflict in Mauritius. He wished to avoid bloodshed, which would only dissipate the already meagre resources of the people, and to concentrate attention on the development of the economy. Only through the import of capital

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and the building up of secondary industries could Mauritius hope to raise the standard of living of the people on the already overcrowded island. Duval said that he himself would like to see a system of proportional representation introduced, but the problem was to convince his followers that this would be adequate to safeguard their future. He appreciated the problems associated with the system of communal representation but he could not see the Creole population accepting anything less. Establishment of such a system would at least have the advantage of laying the problem of communal tension bare. In such a system he thought the Creole population should get about 13 seats in the Legislative Assembly, and that with Muslim support he could get about 50% of the votes in the legislature. He admitted that his followers were easily excitable and that in the small clash which had taken place two days earlier after the election of the P.T. candidate in the Assembly by-election, he had not been able to control his supporters. He did feel, however, that he had better control over his followers than the P.T. had over theirs.

23. Duval has many friends in Paris and London but not amongst the Indian community, either in Mauritius or overseas. He is scornful of the Indians' ability to govern Mauritius impartially and considers many of the leaders in the P.T. to be worthless men. He clearly scorns the Indian mentality as lacking in the necessary honesty and courage required for good government. Duval is very self-confident and one can see evidence of a streak of arrogance in him. In talking about his party and his aspirations he was modest and rational.

24. The P.M. had lately added "Socialist Democrat" to its title. This follows the recent visit of Duval and Fakira (Muslim Mayor of Pt. Louise and a P.M. supporter), to Brussels, where they obtained affiliation for the P.M. to the International Socialist Movement. This move is regarded as a tactical triumph over the Labour Party and the Communist Party, who had sought to brand the P.M. as capitalist because of its support by the Franco-Mauritians. It is interesting to note that the party symbol of the P.M. is the cockerel (the symbol of Kanu in Kenya and the A.S.P. in Zanzibar), and their use of a catch-cry in the municipal by-election - "Guard against Mauritius becoming another Congo". There appears to be an intelligent appreciation by party officials of Communist methods and tactics and a determination to strengthen connections between the party and the lowest level of voters in Mauritius.

COMITE D'ACTION MUSSELMAN - (C.A.M.)

25. The Leader of the C.A.M., Abdul Razak Muhamed, told me that the party was a religious party and had the support of the overwhelming majority of the Muslim community in Mauritius. He said that the problems of the Indian community were very much a reflection of the problems of the Indian sub-continent. (This view was also expressed by the Commissioner for India, Mani). Muhamed said that he had been striving to play a similar role to the one played by Jinnah in India. He had always supported communal representation

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whilst the C.A.M. supported it.

26. My talk with Muhamed strengthened my impression that the alliance will probably not survive much longer. The C.A.M. at the moment is in a powerful position. It holds the balance of power in several areas. The victory of the P.T. candidate, Michael Leal in the general by-election was due to the Muslim votes. Duval said that his relations with Muhamed were amicable and that Muhamed could not afford to make enemies of the P.M. as this would force him into the hands of the Hindus for which he had no great love. Both Muhamed's sons, with whom I spoke, are strong supporters and personal friends of Duval. It is their view that the P.T.-C.A.M. alliance will not last much longer. There were reports that already Muhamed's support is waning but I was unable to check this. It is interesting to note that his two sons are P.M. supporters as this could provide him with an easy road back into the P.M. should he find that his present policy of fence-sitting no longer pays off.

27. A break in the present governing alliance would strengthen the P.M. influence. If both the Muslims and the Hindu Independent Forward Bloc were to vote with the P.M. the Labour Party would be seriously embarrassed and might not survive the crisis.

Independent Forward Bloc.

28. Existing differences between the Premier and the I.F.B. leader, Bissoondoyal, appear to be mainly personal. An entente, especially in event of Muslim hostility appears likely.

Economy.

29. A monocrop economy, Mauritius depends almost exclusively on sugar for its economic welfare. Steps are being taken to develop the tea and fishing industries and to establish some secondary industries which can absorb the fast growing labour force. There are about 8,000 unemployed at present and of the 5,000 school leavers expected this year 3,000 will probably be unemployed. Land is at a premium and rapid secondary economic development is essential if an economic crisis is to be averted. Several Mauritians I spoke to would like to see Mauritius become a Hong Kong of the Indian Ocean but they realise its geographic location is against it. At present development aid comes only from Britain and the United Nations.

30. Broadly speaking, the economic wealth of the country is concentrated in the hands of the Franco-Mauritians and British. They have the predominant interest in the sugar industry and are strongly represented in the banking and business fields. The Creole community is strongly represented in the Civil Service, the professions, the police force and skilled trades. The Indian community

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provides the bulk of the unskilled labour force on the island, basic wage is 4.2 Rupees per day (about 8/- Australia). It is the view of the Industry Minister, Mr. Paturau, himself a Franco-Mauritian, that the rich people of the island must be persuaded to set an example by giving up some of their wealth to the poor in the interest of future prosperity and political stability.

Independence Issue

31. It has been agreed between the British Government and Mauritian political parties that talks will be held some time after October, 1965, to discuss the question of internal self-government. In private conversation several officials thought Independence would probably be given to Mauritius within the next two or three years, perhaps even sooner. They gave the impression of wishing to withdraw from the scene as soon as decently possible. The Independence issue did not appear to be a very live one at the time of my visit and no one with whom I spoke outside the Labour Party discussed the prospect with any enthusiasm. Duval left me in no doubt that if Independence were given to the present Labour Party Government he would attempt a coup d'etat. With good leadership, strong support within the police, and Franco-Mauritian backing there is a fair chance such an attempt would succeed. Little thought appears to have been given ~~below the official level~~ to establishing any close link with Madagascar.

Police

32. The police force totals about 1,500 and includes a hard-hitting Special Mobile Force of 180. About 50% of the police are Creoles, including the five senior officers under the Irish Chief of Police, Maccafney - the only British expatriate. Emergency arrangements have been made to support the police with military units direct from Aden should this become necessary at any stage. It is questionable to what extent the force enjoys the support of the Indian political leaders who wish to see a higher proportion of Indians in senior positions. There is a danger that the force will become divided along racial lines should the British presence be withdrawn.

Communist Penetration.

33. Both Russian and Chinese Communists are active amongst the student population and amongst trade unionists. Recent strikes have shown signs of a certain amount of organisation which bears the stamp of Communist drills. Communist literature is flooding the island. The Chinese Communist flag is seen in many places in the large China town of Port Louise. According to the Mayor of Port Louise, Fakira, of the 23,000 Chinese in Mauritius, at least 30% are Communist sympathizers. Fakira spoke publicly of the danger of Chinese Communist subversion in Mauritius in a broadcast in Tananarive during his recent visit to Madagascar. Duval claims that the P.M. has the vote of the non-Communist Chinese, many of whom are wealthy business and professional

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people. Both Ringadoo and Beejadhur denied to me that there was any threat to Mauritius from the Chinese Communists.

34. The resident Chinese community provides a channel for the introduction and dissemination of Chinese Communist propaganda. This is being actively exploited. The Indian community with its strength amongst unskilled labour is more receptive than other communities. It is through subversion within the Labour Party that the communist threat is greatest. So long as Mauritius remains British this threat can be contained to some extent. I understood from Allen that one of the objects of having Ramgoolam in London at the present time was to try and educate him in the danger of communist subversion.

External Interests and Future Alignments

35. Apart from Britain, Mauritius has close links with South Africa and France. About 20,000 Mauritians have settled in South Africa and many of them retain links with the island. South Africa comes third on the list of suppliers of imports to Mauritius. South Africa Airways service Mauritius.

36. The Franco-Mauritius community and many Creoles retain close links with France; French is the main language of the island; half the laws are still French. Air France services Mauritius. Duval claims to be a close friend of Jacques Foccart, Secretary-General in French Presidency in charge of African and Malagasy Affairs who was visiting neighbouring Reunion at the time of my visit to Mauritius. Duval said Foccart might visit Mauritius. An increased French interest in Mauritius cannot be excluded in the event of a British withdrawal.

37. I could find little evidence of any real interest in Madagascar even though some Mauritians are living there. Mauritians, both Indian and Creole, seem to regard Madagascar as a separate and different world. They look for their friends more towards Europe, South Africa and Asia. Racial links with Madagascar do not appear to be strong.

38. Neither Beejadhur nor Ringadoo admitted to having much contact with the Indian sub-continent and presented the Mauritian Indian community as having evolved a separate island identity without any particular allegiances to the mother country. Nevertheless my impression was that Indian influence is strong in the social and cultural life of the Indian community and can be expected to grow in the political and economic fields. The interest of the Labour Party in recruiting Indian vernacular leaders and police officers is evidence of this.

AUSTRALIAN INTERESTS IN MAURITIUS

Anglo-American base issue

39. Duval is the only person who gave me a clear exposition of his views on the subject, which Allen was

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later interested to hear. Allen himself said he knew nothing official about the rumoured suggestions that there might be an Anglo-American strategic base in Mauritius. One idea is that such a base might be established on Rodrigues Island, an island dependency of Mauritius, about 350 miles due east of Mauritius. Allen said the Governor in England and the Acting Governor could well have information on this subject which he did not know about.

40. When first I spoke to Duval he said he was undecided about the Base. He did not mind the British but he had reservations about the United States coming to Mauritius. Everywhere they went the Americans seemed to swamp places and he did not know whether their presence in Mauritius would be a good thing. On the other hand, the Base would bring much-needed capital and employment to the island. Before I left Duval said he had made up his mind. His thoughts on the Base issue were tied closely to his thinking on Independence. If the British stayed and guaranteed law and order then they could have the Base (as a concession, not a lease which would only provide excuse for constant review, hence trouble) in exchange for economic assistance of one kind or another. The Americans could come as well. If the British left then he could not agree to any Base. To do so would be to invite a strong Communist agitation against the party in Mauritius which would agitate for the removal of the Base and only increase the difficulties of ensuring political stability.

41. The nominated Franco-Mauritian Minister of Industry, Commerce and External Communications, Paturau, a former Free French Air Force pilot, and highly regarded in official circles, took the opportunity of my call on him to suggest that Australia should press Britain to have the matter discussed more openly with Mauritian political leaders. He said there was a need to dispel fears and resolve tensions on the subject in the island and that the British were being too tight-lipped about it. What was needed was for the Mauritian political leaders to be taken more into confidence, although not on close military secrets. He felt that if Mauritian political leaders could be made to feel part of a major Western effort to preserve peace in the world and to feel that their contribution would be a vital link in the overall pattern of global strategy, then there would be more chance of encouraging moderate rather than extremist views on the issue. He felt that Australia, as an interested party in the future security of the Indian Ocean region, could play an important part in influencing Britain. (Please protect Paturau, who expressly requested that this suggestion not be attributed to him).

42. I was unable to obtain any firm Labour Party line on the subject. My impression was that Labour Party thinking will be strongly influenced by prevalent Afro-Asian attitudes. After Independence it seems inevitable that Mauritius will be under strong pressure to oppose all military bases. The attitude of India can be expected to influence the Mauritian Labour Party thinking on this issue.

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Civil Aviation

43. At present, Qantas runs a once-weekly service from Johannesburg to Perth through Mauritius, using Electra aircraft. The extension of the Mauritius airstrip is expected to be completed by the end of this year and I understand that Qantas hope to introduce Boeings on the Mauritius-Perth run late in 1965. This would reduce the present thirteen hour run via Cocos to about 7½ hours. The present route provides the only direct link between Australia and South Africa. With the connection with BOAC through Nairobi Australia has a useful alternative route to Europe which could be usefully employed in time of emergency. Should the Kangaroo route become inoperative Australia has a major interest in the maintenance of political stability in Mauritius and in a government policy sympathetic to the retention of landing rights on this Africa-Australia route. So long as the British Colonial Government remains in Mauritius there is no question about the security of these rights. After Independence it is doubtful whether a Labour Party Government would be able to withstand pressures from the African mainland or from the Afro-Asian block for the enforcement of economic sanctions against South Africa, including the disconnection of air links.

44. Under a minority Creole Government on the other hand, Australia's interests would probably be secure.

IMMIGRATION

45. With the population increasing at the rate of about 3½% per annum and with an acute shortage of land, Mauritius has some acute problems, primarily economic and social, problems considered by some officials as second only to those of India. Part of the solution lies in increased domestic employment and immigration. The Qantas representative in Mauritius, Mr. J. Cowan, is receiving enquiries about immigration to Australia on an average of one a day. Although he is not a Government official he is constantly being mistaken for one. He said he understood approaches had been made to the British Government to ask if they would undertake, on behalf of the Australian Government, the vetting of immigration enquiries in Mauritius. Allen told me later that he had told the Australian Migration Officer on his way to Nairobi, Mr. Flynn, that Britain could not undertake immigration responsibilities on behalf of Australia.

46. At present applicants for visas, both for permanent residence, business and tourist, have to write direct to Canberra. As a result of a recent tightening-up of Australian regulations every person from Mauritius must have an official letter of authority, and applicants even for business visas, white or coloured, have to wait for an average minimum period of one month for the letter. According to Cowan, business people particularly are upset by this requirement, and Australia may stand to lose trade opportunities as a result.

47. Cowan said that cases were occurring of unsuitable immigrants managing to obtain entry permits to Australia as a result of the false impression they were able to give on

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paper. For instance, an Indian had recently obtained a permit because he had had photographs taken of himself under bright lights which made him appear paler than in fact he was. The trouble in a small island like Mauritius was that once somebody in this category obtained permission, not only were more suitable applicants who had been refused upset, but other members of the Indian community started applying. The admission of the Acting Attorney-General, Bullox, (on the recommendation, I think, of the President of the Senate, Sir Alistair McMullen) had led to several enquiries about the eligibility of people for residence. Cowan said that there were probably 10,000 people of true white complexion who would be eligible for settlement in Australia at any time (i.e. British and French Mauritians), as well as roughly 60,000 of the Creole population who would be eligible to apply for residence under our existing immigration regulations. Cowan thought that between 40% and 50% of these would be quite acceptable. What worried him about the present system was that people who were not suitable had been obtaining permits.

48. If there is a deterioration in the present political situation in the island, which there could easily be, Australia could expect to be subjected to increased pressure for residence permits. On the surface it would appear that a predominant number of the members of the European and Creole communities would be suitable immigrants for Australia. Many of them have a considerable amount of capital and maintain a reasonable, and in some cases, very high standard of living. Many of the predominantly European Creole population belong to the skilled artisan and business classes. It is to be noted that none of the Ministers with whom I spoke raised the question of immigration to Australia; although a short critical article (copy attached) appeared in the pro-Labour weekly "Mauritius Times" during my visit.

49. There would seem to be a case for having a resident Government Officer in Mauritius who could handle migration as well as trade enquiries, and I recommend that consideration be given to appointing a Deputy Trade Commissioner to Nairobi who can make regular visits to Mauritius and handle both trade and migration enquiries received there. There would seem to be disadvantages in appointing a full-time Immigration Officer in Mauritius as this might accelerate the present flow of enquiries.

50. The people I met were pleased to make contact with Australia at the official level. General interest was shown in Australia and no points of criticism were raised in any of my conversations. The leader of the Muslim Party asked me about our aboriginal and immigration policies but spoke sympathetically of our problems. He said that Australia showed more humanity in administering its immigration policy than the British did in Mauritius. The Minister for Education said that any further help Australia could give with training awards under SCAAP would be appreciated. Radio Australia programmes in East Africa in

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French should find a receptive audience. In this connection a gift of transistor radios for distribution in rural areas might be considered.

Conclusion

51. Australia has an interest in seeing that Britain remains in Mauritius as long as possible. After independence a period of political instability can be expected, during which racial violence could flare up. French, Indian, Afro-Asian, Communist or United Nations intervention could follow. The possibility of a minority coup by the anti-Communist Creole minority cannot be excluded. If Indian predominance were to lead Mauritius into Afro-Asian and Chinese Communist alignments on South African questions, Australia could find its landing rights in jeopardy.

Recommendations

52. I recommend the following steps be taken:

(1) In the light of Australia's interests, explore the present thinking of the Indian Government on the question of military bases in the Indian Ocean. In their own strategic interests India might be persuaded to exert a moderating influence on the Mauritian Labour Party. In the light of the remarks of the Mauritian Minister for Industry, Commerce and External Communications, Mr. Paturau, we might also follow the matter up in Washington and London.

(2) Immigration. Investigate further, possible ways and means of handling this question more effectively in Mauritius.

(3) Visitors to Australia. Give consideration to inviting to Australia the Premier, Dr. Ramgoolam, and possibly also the Minister of Housing, Lands and Town and Country Planning, Mr. Duval, under the S.O.V.F.

23/10/1964

A.F. Dingle

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EXTRACT FROM

"MAURITIUS TIMES"

25/9/1964

British Immigrants to Australia

The British Government is eager to send 30,000 immigrants to Australia in the six months up to December 31. We wonder whether some of our people could not be admitted there on similar conditions as our unemployment problem is much more acute than that of UK. The Mauritian Government could well make an approach to Australia for the purpose.

Even UK knows quite well of our unemployment problem. She could have put our case to the Australian Government. But the trouble with us is the colour of our skin. When colonies ruled by Europeans have to sell their goods, obviously they shut their eyes so that they can't see the colour of our skin. Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Canada which accept our white emigrants only will not have to wait for long to learn the bitter lesson. The youths of today will not tolerate it.

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION, DAR ES SALAAM

INWARDS CABLEGRAM

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FROM CANBERRA

RECEIVED: 15.9.64.

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YOUR MEMORANDUM 548.

DINGLES VISIT APPROVED.

(re visit to Mauritius)

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OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA

TEMPLE BAR 2435

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE,

AUSTRALIA HOUSE,

STRAND,

LONDON, W.C.2.

In reply quote No.

3/12/86/1

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30th April 1964

Memo no. 600

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
Canberra A.C.T.

The Seychelles

The Seychelles, comprising 99 islands and islets, spread over some thousands of miles of sea and with a total land area of about 156 square miles, depend absolutely on the growing of coconuts for a living. Seventy per cent of the Colony's export income derives from the sale of coconuts, the main market being the Indian sub-continent which imports some 6,000 tons of copra a year.

2. As told by Terrell (Colonial Office) the industry, however, is in a state of decline. The palms, which had originally been planted in virgin soil, are one hundred years afterwards still being regarded as self-maintaining. Years of poor husbandry and sustained neglect has led to lower yields and increased loss from disease (melittomma). There are now considerable areas of land under coconut which have long ceased to be economic.

3. The result for the plantations (owned for the most part by the old French plantocracy) has been higher costs and lower returns, while the effect on the plantation workers has been increased unemployment as the owners off-load labour to reduce costs. Cultivation, previously labour-intensive, is now undertaken on an extensive basis. Plantation unemployment has been exacerbated as the planters respond to the progressive raising of minimum wages by still further reductions in their permanent labour force. In statistical terms, plantation employment, which provided work for 10,000 in the peak year of 1955, has now fallen to a little over 5,000.

4. Quite apart from the reduction of employment opportunities on the plantations, the Seychelles suffers from a rapidly growing population (at present 45,000) which necessitates the provision of an additional 400 jobs each year.

5. The economics of the Colony explain both its politics and the rationale for the present pattern of government expenditure.

Political and Constitutional

6. The Seychelles has two main political parties - the Seychelles Taxpayers and Producers Association (TAPA) and the Seychelles Islanders United Party (SIUP). Broadly speaking, TAPA comprises the planters and the people of European (French) descent; together these classes account for most of the taxes paid in the islands; they therefore constitute a considerable

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political power in the Colony. SIUP represents the poorer classes and the Africans (mainly descended from liberated slaves) and Creoles; SIUP was formed early last year in preparation for the July Legislative Council elections.

7. Paradoxically, it is the Africans and Creoles who are most in favour of continued Colonial Office administration of the Seychelles. The planters, on the other hand, demand early internal self-government. Terrell said that it would be wrong, however, to mistake the planters aspirations for constitutional advance for progressive thinking. They want self-government for the precise purpose of reducing taxes and curtailing British grants-in-aid. Terrell explained that since 1958 the Colony has been grant-aided. This has entailed much closer control by Whitehall of the territory's affairs since, once a territory becomes grant-aided, the British Treasury exercises a determining influence on every aspect of its revenue and expenditure. Terrell agreed that, under self-government, a TAPA-controlled legislature could no doubt cut back recurrent expenditure to the point where grants from the British Treasury were no longer required. He suggested, however, that this would entail an intolerable reduction in social services. Certainly this is what those persons represented by SIUP believe, and certainly this explains the SIUP's concern that the UK should not relinquish its present tight control over local affairs.

8. Terrell emphasised that the differences between the TAPA and SIUP were over self-government and not independence. Neither Party was interested in the latter. Both realised that the Seychelles has neither the political nor the economic viability to stand completely alone; while those planters who have previously been voracious in criticism of "Whitehall iniquities" have been sobered by developments in Zanzibar. Following the Zanzibar coup, TAPA requested that the Governor send a telegram to the Queen pledging the loyalty of the Seychelles, and their wish to continue to remain under the Crown. All in all, Terrell could not foresee any significant pressure building up for further constitutional advance, at least during the next five years.

9. Having said this, Terrell observed that the 5000-odd Seychellois living and working in Kenya might have different views on the subject of independence. Caught up in the continental mood of Pan-Africanism some of these have lately begun to utter vague noises about the Seychelles linking up with East Africa. In the islands themselves, these stirrings of nationalism have had a sympathy effect in the creation of one or two embryonic splinter groups purporting to support the concept of Seychellois independence. The significance of these groups is potential rather than actual. In any election held tomorrow, they would be lucky to muster a combined vote of 100. But, in the Seychelles there is a significant untapped reserve of voting power. If some nationalist demagogue could succeed in rousing out of its apathy that section of the population which never bothers to register its vote, the political situation in the islands would alter overnight. As a measure of the public's present lack of interest in politics, Terrell mentioned that in the July 1963 elections, for instance, those who registered as voters were only 30 per cent of the persons estimated to be qualified to do so, while the number of persons who had duly voted were 15 per cent of that estimated figure.

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The franchise is open to all adults who are able at least to write their name in block capitals.

10. Asked about the current constitutional position of the Colony, Terrell said that the Seychelles are administered by the Governor with the advice of an Executive Council, while legislation is enacted by the Governor with the advice and consent of a Legislative Council. In both cases, however, and though he would not normally do so, the Governor can act independently. The Legislative Council consists of the Governor, as President, 5 official members and 7 unofficials, of whom 5 are elected. The Executive Council comprises the Governor, as President, 4 official members and 4 unofficials, the latter drawn from the unofficial members of the Legislative Council. In the elections held in July, TAPA won three of the elected seats and two went to independents. One of the independents was supported by the SIUP, while the other was supported by both parties. Terrell commented that, in the past, when the elected members had all belonged to TAPA, the division within the Legislature and the Executive Council was invariably the electoral element versus official and nominated members. The division was usually characterized by the elected members' opposition to government taxation measures to finance sorely-needed social services. Now, with the inclusion of two independents, the Colonial Office hope that deliberations in the Legislative and Executive Council will assume a more responsible character.

11. Terrell said that the dominant political figure in the Seychelles is a Mrs. Hilda Stevenson-Delhomme; she is the leading member of TAPA, her husband owning one of the largest plantations in the island. Amongst the up-and-comings Terrell, listed a Chinese Seychellois, Mr. Mancham, and Mr. Frichot, a young Franco-Seychellois. Both receive some support from the SIUP.

Government Development Expenditure

12. Government expenditure in the Seychelles is based on the need to meet the pressing problem of unemployment. This has involved, in the first place, heavy expenditure on agricultural research and improvement, particularly in respect of the coconut industry. The Colonial Office believe that, through the organization and modernisation of the coconut industry, a great fillip can be given to the islands as a whole. In particular, with export revenues and planters' incomes increasing, employment opportunities on the plantations should likewise grow. Terrell said that there is undoubtedly great scope for improving the productivity of the plantations. The difficulty has been to persuade the plantation owners to help themselves. Not only do the latter refuse to make the necessary capital outlays to tidy up their estates, introduce new seedlings etc., but they also object to the taxes levied by the Government to assist in meeting the costs of Government research and improvements. (Pest control schemes, coconut palm nurseries, bracken fern eradication, sale of fertiliser at subsidised rates, extension services and marketing schemes). The result has been that most of the finance for the coconut improvement programme has had to come from Colonial Development and Welfare funds. Colonial Development and Welfare funds have also been used for the financing of land-settlement schemes, under which African and Creole cultivators are settled on small plots of land averaging five acres. The settlers grow export crops such as coconut and cinnamon; cash crops like sugar-cane and

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tobacco, and food crops like tropical vegetables and cassava. It is reckoned that with government assistance to get him started, the individual cultivator should be able to make a subsistence-plus living within a period of three to four years.

13. Other schemes under the agricultural heading include crop diversification programmes and reafforestation schemes.

14. Another main prong of the development plan has been the Government's efforts to encourage tourism. In this connexion, much money has been spent on building a network of roads to open up scenic attractions of the main island of Mahé. The roads, of course, also serve the additional purpose of assisting in the transport of produce from the plantations. The road-building programme also provides employment, ~~as~~ albeit temporary, for some 1600 artisans and labourers. The greatest obstacle to the development of tourism is the insufficient communications with the outside world. Due east of Mombassa, The Seychelles only regular transport connection is a ship from Mombassa every month which loads coconuts in the Seychelles and unloads them at Bombay, but ~~this~~ does not stop on the return trip. The Colonial Office are endeavouring to interest private operators in establishing a once-a-week flying-boat service from Mombassa. However, apart altogether from the difficulty of finding flying-boats nowadays, there is the further problem of guaranteeing traffic. Whether the hotels or the communications come first is the chicken and egg problem. Terrell said that the Seychellois themselves are all for trying to blackmail the Americans into building an airstrip in the islands as a quid pro quo for allowing them to retain the satellite tracking station. The RAF cannot be interested in an air base because they claim that the Seychelles are not strategically located; this would apparently apply even if the facilities at Gan were denied to the UK.

15. The Colonial Office is placing some hopes on development of the fishing industry. While there are believed to be good fishing grounds throughout the area, the fishing industry has in fact never been properly developed. Practically none of the inhabitants are qualified navigators and therefore do not fish out of sight of land. There are no trawlers in the islands, nor are there cold storage facilities. The catch is for local consumption almost wholly. Above all, there has been no research done into what ~~market~~ to the Seychelles fish there would be around the Indian Ocean littoral. The line of advance in fishing is to be along three prongs: market research, an attempt to interest a UK firm in establishing cold storage facilities, and training in the industry to be given in the UK to selected inhabitants.

16. We are sending a copy of this memorandum to Dar-es-Salaam.

(Lance Joseph)

for Acting Senior External Affairs Representative

Australian High Commission,
Dar es Salaam

Referred for information.

Lance Joseph
(Lance Joseph)

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In reply quote No. 3/12/86/1

Memo No. 386

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA.

Mauritius.

We spoke last week to Terrell (Colonial Office) about constitutional and political developments in Mauritius.

2. As brief background, Terrell said that, when discovered by the Portuguese and subsequently by the Dutch in the 16th century, the island was uninhabited. The Dutch used it mainly as a port of call on their trading expeditions to the East Indies. It also became the practice to maroon undesirables from the crew and (including women) from the Netherlands itself on the island. The result was that, from a few outcast individuals, a rag-tag European population had grown to several hundred by the time the French arrived in 1722. French settlement during the next one hundred years resulted in a great expansion of plantation sugar growing, first introduced by the Dutch in the preceding century. To work these plantations, the French brought African slaves from both the mainland and Madagascar so that by the time the island was occupied by the British in 1810, 80% of its population of 80,000 were African slaves. Abolition of slavery in 1833 robbed the plantation owners of their main source of labour (in general the freed slaves drifted into the villages) but the problem was solved in the succeeding decades by mass importation of indentured labour from the Indian sub-continent. The Indians have since multiplied rapidly, at present constituting some 65% of the island's population of 680,000. There are in addition approximately 200,000 Creoles (predominantly Africans of mixed race), the remainder of the population comprising Europeans (mainly French descent) and Chinese.

3. With no indigenous population, it has only been in the last decade or two that a Mauritian consciousness has grown up, and, even today, the individual Mauritian tends to identify himself with his home community rather than with the island. Most of the groups on the island bear a certain latent animosity towards each other, and, because of their numerical superiority, the Indians are feared by all. Political parties tend for the most part to be regarded as representing one group of people (though they are in theory all inter-racial and can all show members from other communities) and the dominant party, the Labour Party, is predominantly Indian. However, there is by no means uniformity within one group and there has arisen a great confusion of political factions, splinter groups and so on. All of this has a marked effect on attitudes towards constitutional advance, non-Indians being inclined to be wary about full responsible self-government on the grounds that it would lift, they claim, the last restraints from Indian power.

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4. The history of recent politics in Mauritius has revolved virtually solely around the desire of the various minority communities to ensure constitutional safeguards for their interests. In the 1950's the political fears and aspirations of the races centred on the voting system to be adopted for elections to the Mauritian Legislature. Broadly speaking the Indians in Mauritius are spread evenly over the island (as plantation workers) while the other races are grouped in small communities in scattered towns and villages. This meant that in any equitable demarcation of electorates, non-Indian representation in the Legislative Council would suffer. The minority communities therefore supported the introduction of the system of proportional representation with the single transferable vote. This was opposed, however, by the majority Labour Party (representing most of the Indian population together with about half of the Creoles) which, while acknowledging the fears of the minority, argued that proportional representation would tend to accentuate communalism and to weaken party organisation by stimulating rivalry between candidates of the same party. They insisted instead on the simple-majority, single-member constituency system.

5. It was finally agreed to establish an Electoral Commission to examine and report on the pros and cons of the political parties' various proposals. The Commission reported in February 1958. It recommended the creation of 40 single-member constituencies with the condition that in choosing the twelve appointed members to the Legislative Council, the Governor should use his powers of nomination so as to ensure that each main section of the population sent to the Council, as finally constituted, a number of representatives broadly proportionate to its own numerical strength (at the same time, the Governor was to ensure that his nominations did not frustrate the results of the elections).

6. The Commission's recommendations were accepted by the British Government as the basis for elections to the Legislative Council scheduled for March 1959. At the same time, it was agreed that the principle of parity of representation should prevail in the selection of the unofficial Ministers of the Executive Council; that is, the Executive Council was to consist of the three ex-officio members and nine unofficial Ministers chosen in order to reflect the composition of the Legislative Council.

7. In the event, the Colonial Secretary's decision was accepted by the Labour Party and by the Moslem Committee of Action (representing Indian Moslems). The decision was not, however, welcomed by the Parti Mauricien (which represents the Franco-Mauritians and the other more conservative elements of the population) or by the Independent Forward Bloc (a breakaway group from the Labour Party). Though contesting the elections, the Parti Mauricien and the Independent Forward Bloc refused to accept the invitation to provide representatives to sit in Executive Council.

8. The 1959 elections resulted in a victory for the Labour Party in 23 seats. The Independent Forward Bloc won 6 seats, the Moslem Committee of Action 5, the Parti Mauricien 3, and Trade Union candidates 2. There was one independent. The Executive Council was composed of three officials, and unofficial Ministers drawn from the Labour Party and the Moslem Committee of Action. For the period, March, 1959 to October, 1963, when new elections were held, the Independent Forward Bloc and the Parti Mauricien constituted the official opposition in the

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Mauritius Legislative Council. In the event of a natural

9. In the interim, in July, 1961, there had been further talks in London with the Colonial Secretary at which the Labour Party had pressed hard for early advance towards full self-government, to be followed by complete independence. The other parties, for reasons already outlined in paragraph 3, were opposed to too rapid a constitutional advance. The final result was a compromise in which substantial agreement was reached on a two-stage plan for the colony's advance towards full internal self-government. The first stage, which was implemented immediately, provided for the leader of the majority party in the Legislature to be styled Chief Minister, and for the Governor to consult the Chief Minister on allocation of portfolios, appointment and removal of Ministers, and on the summoning, proroguing and dissolution of the Legislative Council. The second stage, which was to be implemented after the next election in effect was to provide internal self government with the Chief Minister becoming Premier, the Executive Council being re-styled the Council of Ministers, and the Legislative Council being re-named the Legislative Assembly.

10. New elections were held in October last year, the result of which was to reduce the number of seats held by the Labour Party from 23 to 19. Labour's coalition allies, the Muslim Committee of Action, also lost one seat and now have only 4. The Independent Forward Bloc improved their position by one seat and now have 7, while the Parti Mauricien was the main beneficiary winning in all, 8 seats. Independents have two seats a gain of one on their 1959 results. The Parti Mauricien and Independent Forward Bloc have now accepted the invitation to join with the other parties in an all-party coalition government.

11. Terrell said that the overall result of the elections had been to slow down the impetus towards independence by strengthening those who did not wish to have it. Nevertheless, following the elections, the Governor inaugurated further talks with the leaders of the main political parties. These were followed by a visit to London last month of the (now) Premier, Dr. Ramgoolam, for constitutional talks with the Colonial Office. As a result, a package deal on future constitutional advance has been worked out which has received the substantial agreement of all political parties. In effect, the British Government has undertaken to extend to Mauritius gradually over the next four years the attributes of full internal self-government. This will involve the surrender of the Governor's present powers over the public service, and full delegation of control over Mauritian defence and security forces to the Premier. At the same time, the UK Government and Mauritius political parties have agreed that further talks should be held some time after October, 1965 to determine future constitutional advance.

12. Asked to comment on the likely direction of Mauritius' constitutional progress, Terrell listed the alternatives as: maintenance of the link with the UK; independence; a link with the Republic of Malagasy; merger with an East African Federation; merger with India. Terrell said that most people in Mauritius will readily acknowledge the advantages of retaining the sovereignty of the UK. An independent Mauritius, for instance, would not have such ready access to the London money market, or the necessary credit worthiness to be able to raise readily loans from the various international agencies such as IERD. As long as Britain retains responsibility for Mauritius, moreover, the island can be assured of a certain minimum of capital aid. The

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Population projections indicate with fair certainty that the can also count on British assistance in the event of a natural calamity, an important consideration given the island's vulnerability to cyclones. Finally, the example of Zanzibar has served to sober some of the waverers who hitherto might have gone along happily with those who are pressing for independence. Nevertheless, Terrell agreed, the Indians, who form the overwhelming majority of people in Mauritius, have set their sights on constitutional advance. This, coupled with the current trend of world opinion, led him to believe that the period of British sovereignty must surely be limited.

13. Terrell said that, economically, there is considerable scope for closer commercial relations with the Republic of Malagasy. The latter is large and under populated, and has considerable development potential. Furthermore, there are numerous racial and historical ties between the islands of Madagascar and Mauritius. The difficulty lies in getting development programmes going in Malagasy which could provide the expanding employment opportunities necessary to provide an outlet for the burgeoning Mauritius population. There is also a further difficulty posed by the extremely close relations between the Malagasy Republic and France. A Malagasy market for industries established in Mauritius (which, given the geographical facts of the situation, might ordinarily be expected) is denied because this would entail a corresponding reduction in purchases from France.

14. On and off over the last few years, various Mauritian ministers have hinted at the desirability of Mauritius joining in an East African Federation. According to Terrell, Dr. Ramgoolan is the man behind this move; but, in Terrell's words, the move is merely a "stunt", aimed at capturing some of the Creole voters for the predominantly Indian Labour Party. Terrell considers Ramgoolan to be well aware that if a proposal for merger ever came to be an issue, the East Africans (with their own serious unemployment problem) would be unlikely to want Mauritius and the Mauritians unlikely to want East Africa.

15. The Indian majority at heart probably would most prefer a solution linking Mauritius to India. But this again is hardly a possible solution as it would not be readily acceptable to India, on the one hand, or to the non-Indian Mauritians, on the other. If there was any move in this direction, or alternatively if the growth of poverty, starvation and sickness should lead in the future to serious disorder, Terrell fears the possibility of the establishment by force of Creole control over the Indian. The opportunity for this is always present since, while Indians are numerically the largest group, the security forces and police are very largely composed of Creoles.

Economic.

16. Terrell said that the economic problems of Mauritius can be roughly summed up as:-

- (i) over population in relation to available resources.
- (ii) over dependence on one commodity (and its by-products).
- (iii) shortage of technical and administrative skills.

Terrell explained that improvement in health facilities since the war have brought about phenomenal increases in population. The present population of Mauritius is around 680,000 with the population density of something over 300 per square kilometer.

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Population projections indicate with fair certainty that the population will have reached one million by 1980, and three million by the end of the century. At the latter figure the population density would be about 1300, which would be too disastrous to contemplate. Even the lesser figure of one million must mean a substantial lowering in the standard of living with less food, less medical attention, less education opportunities, fewer hospitals and massive unemployment.

17. Sugar is overwhelmingly the mainstay of the economy. Nearly half the island area, more than half of employment (in which there is a problem of casualisation), 90% of industrial production (cane sugar), and almost 100% of exports (cane sugar, rum and molasses) is accounted for by the sugar industry. Specialisation in sugar makes it necessary to import a wide variety of commodities. The trend is for a worsening of the balance of payments; the difficulty in finding export markets for increased sugar production has in the last few years become a major problem.

18. Two detailed reports produced in 1960 - Meade on the economic problem, and Titmuss on the social problem - aimed at tackling these problems. To be fully effective the recommendations in both reports must be acted upon together. Meade sought to investigate problems (II) and (III) and came up with answers designed to control sugar output, to increase production of other agricultural commodities and to expand small scale industrial development. Titmuss sought the elaboration of a whole scheme of social security which would be based on and which, if Meade's suggestions could be got under way, would promote the reduction of the average family unit from 6-10 children, to 3. The burden of their message was more or less that family planning can only hope to succeed if accompanied by drastic economic change and extensive social security measures.

19. In 1961 the Mauritian government produced a five-year development plan based on the Meade and Titmuss reports. However the government is meeting difficulties with the Roman Catholic Church over the question of birth control. They are also running into criticism from plantation owners over increased taxes. Far more serious, however, is that certain of Meade's estimates are turning out to be too low, and the Government has not yet found itself able, despite the revenue from export tax on sugar, to lower, as intended, the taxes on other industries. Thus the intended stimulus for diversification has not been applied.

20. Copies of this memorandum have been sent to Cape Town, Washington and Dar-es-Salaam.

Lance Joseph
(Lance Joseph)
for Senior External Affairs Representative

Australian High Commission,
DAR-ES-SALAAM.

Referred for your information.

(Lance Joseph)

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4th March, 1964

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA.

MAURITIUS AND EAST AFRICA

Mr. V. Ringadoo, Minister of Labour in Mauritius, passed through Nairobi on 2nd March on his way home from London where constitutional talks between the British Government and the Mauritius Chief Minister, Dr. Ramgoolam, have been taking place. En route Ringadoo had also visited Israel and Germany (presumably West).

2. Ringadoo told press reporters at Nairobi airport that an East African Federation would be "a very good thing" for Mauritius. The government of Mauritius had been talking for three years with East African leaders on the Federation and there were many things which could be shared by the island and the mainland - among them education, trade and communications.

3. Commenting on the London constitutional talks, Ringadoo said that it had been agreed that Mauritius should enter the second stage of its self-government and the Legislative Council would become a Legislative Assembly, with Dr. Ramgoolam as Prime Minister. Independence had not been discussed during these talks but the island would have complete internal self-government by the end of the year and "Uhuru" would follow soon after. Speaking about the elections in October, 1963, which reduced his Labour Party's overall majority to 19 seats out of 40, Ringadoo said that the present coalition government was secure and could command 23 seats. But there was a move to have all the parties on the island in the government and he thought they would work together well. There were, however, elements in the island which wanted integration with Britain. Ringadoo said it was unlikely that the Prime Minister would call an election before independence.

4. Although responsibility for reporting on developments in Mauritius lies with the Australian Embassy in South Africa, we consider the above comments worth reporting to you. An increasing number of political leaders from Mauritius are expressing interest in joining an East African Federation and should Mauritius adopt, possibly in 1965, a foreign policy in line with that of East Africa, and agree to boycott trade with South Africa, Australia would be directly affected through its dependence on the island as a fuelling point on the present QANTAS Perth/Johannesburg route. Mauritius might also become important to Australia should the "Kangaroo" route ever become unoperable and it became necessary to fall back on an emergency air route to Europe not dependent on fuelling points either on the African continent or in a large section of Asia.

5. The British Air Attache' in Nairobi has ^{informed us} inferred that British emergency plans could be seriously affected if Mauritius became politically unstable, since the R.A.F. has an emergency supply route which avoids overflying Africa by going from Ascension Island to Mauritius by skirting the Cape.

(A.F. Dingle)
Second Secretary

Copy: London
Cape Town.

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